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RANDOM REMINISCENCES







Charles H. E. Brookfield.

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD: 1902.

RANDOM REMINISCENCES

BY

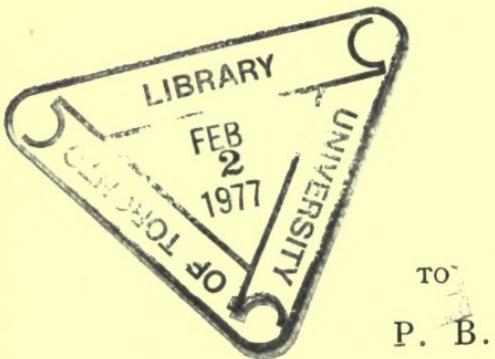
CHARLES H. E. BROOKFIELD

SECOND IMPRESSION

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PREFACE

I HAVE endeavoured in these random reminiscences to avoid an error into which the autobiographer is prone to fall—that of taking himself, his actions, and his thoughts too seriously. I am not aware that I have included in this volume anything which appears to me of importance; I trust that I have not, either, committed the impertinence of expressing any views.

One of my grandfathers used to tell a story of an old Quaker who lived in the North of England about a hundred years ago. One morning, as he sat in his study, his son burst into the room clad in a scarlet coat with his hunting-cap cocked on one side. The young man half seated himself on the corner of the writing-table, set his arms akimbo, swung his leg defiantly, and exclaimed, ‘Father, I’m an atheist, and I don’t care who knows it!’ The old man looked up from his work, pushed his spectacles on to his forehead, and then replied in measured tones, ‘Well, John, if tha beest, tha needst not mak’ sic a Tom-fool o’ thasel’!

Everything in this book is, to the best of my belief, absolutely true, though here and there I have altered a name. If one or two stories should seem familiar, I would remind the reader that lack of novelty is an essential element in a reminiscence. Owing to an unfortunate weakness which I have for hearing myself speak, I have repeatedly told my stories to my friends, but I am so sanguine as to hope that some may buy my book whom I have not yet the honour of numbering in that long-suffering sodality, and that they may find here and there something to entertain them.

For personal and other reasons I have omitted nine-tenths of what I remember.

CHARLES H. E. BROOKFIELD.

DORKING, 1902.

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RANDOM REMINISCENCES

CHAPTER I

School report, 1870—Friends of my parents—Tennyson, Carlyle, Thackeray, Dickens—A few of my father's stories—Westminster School—Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's, 1872—Archbishops Tait and Thomson.

A FEW days ago I found in a box of old letters a school report, describing me as I was, or as I appeared to my schoolmaster, or as he wished my father to think I appeared to him, at the age of thirteen. Although thirty odd years may have wrought some changes in my character and disposition, perhaps I may be allowed to put forward my old dominie's estimate of me, as I may have been, by way of an introduction.

'33, HEREFORD SQUARE, S.W.,
'April 21, 1870.

'REVEREND SIR,

'Charlie, as his mark-book will have already shown you, has taken an exceedingly good position

in his class this term. The distinct progress which I have been able to trace in Latin has been very gratifying. In French he is getting over what has always been to him his most serious difficulty—his ignorance of the grammar. As to English, there is a decided improvement in his spelling. For quickness in comprehending the general drift of a speech and the power of appropriately, easily, and neatly expressing himself he is unrivalled. In algebra and Greek he has worked steadily and made progress. I am sure that this result has not been gained by overwork; on the contrary, I think that if he were to show a little more emulation he would do much better. I shall arrange the marks so that next term three prizes may be fairly within his reach, and I hope he will feel that you are interested in the result. Polite, sensible, and clever, Charlie has always seemed to me a most agreeable companion. The only flaw which I can notice in his character consists in his want of self-assertion. However pleasant it may be for a master or for older boys to have a pupil or companion who never opposes his will to theirs, however amiable may be the conduct which arises from an unwillingness to hurt the feelings of others, still, for a boy's own good, I think it is well that he should be able to maintain his own convictions, even at the risk of being browbeaten or bullied. To the upright

principles and tender feelings which Charlie already has, I should therefore like to see him add that resolute will which is the best safeguard against those evil influences and bad companions with which everyone, as he grows up, is bound to meet.

‘I remain, reverend sir,

‘Yours respectfully,

‘G. HART.

‘REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD.’

Although as a child I was brought into contact with many celebrated people, friends of my father and mother—Carlyle, Tennyson, Thackeray, Dickens, and others—I have, unfortunately, no interesting personal reminiscences of them. This may be partly due to the fact that I have a slight hollow just where I ought to have the bump of veneration. Thackeray—for whom, despite this phrenological shortcoming, I have an almost boundless admiration, partly inherited and partly cultivated—I could hardly be expected to remember, as he died when I was only six years old. Carlyle my father used to take me to see, but I can only recall an old man of rough exterior and primitive habits, seated on the floor by his fireplace, smoking a long straight clay pipe. I have visions of Tennyson drying his tobacco on the fire-shovel, and I have not forgotten the whiff which used to come from his larder, where

the meat had to hang till it matured to his liking. I was reared, however, on stories of these giants from my parents, who knew them well, and some of these anecdotes have not, as far as I know, been hitherto published.

My mother used to describe to me Tennyson's first appearance at Clevedon Court, whither my father brought him when quite a young man to present him to her family. My grandfather, Sir Charles Elton, who had fought in the trenches under the Duke of York, was a courtly old gentleman with a vast expanse of bald head, which sloped gradually into an eminence towards the poll. Immediately on entering the library in which my grandfather was sitting, the long-haired young poet marched up to him, and, without any warning, laid his palm upon the old gentleman's cranium, and, after gazing into his face for a few seconds with knitted brows, suddenly rolled forth in rugged Lincolnshire accents: 'You must have done a great many foolish things in your life, with this great big bump of benevolence of yours!' In those days the elderly were not used to being patronized by the young, and I believe my grandfather was furious.

Tennyson invited my great-uncle, Henry Hallam, to be godfather to his first boy, to which he readily consented. As they were walking up the church-

yard side by side, the historian inquired of Tennyson, ‘What name do you mean to give him?’ ‘We thought of calling him Hallam,’ said the poet. ‘Oh, had you not better call him Alfred?’ modestly suggested my great-uncle. ‘Aye!’ replied the naïve bard, ‘but what if he should turn out a fool?’

My father was dining one night at the Oxford and Cambridge Club with George Venables, Frank Lushington, Tennyson, and two or three others. After dinner the poet insisted on putting his feet on the table, tilting back his chair *more Americano*. There were strangers in the room, and he was expostulated with for his uncouthness, but in vain. ‘*Do* put down your feet!’ pleaded his host. ‘Why should I?’ retorted Tennyson. ‘I’m very comfortable as I am.’ ‘Everyone’s staring at you,’ said another. ‘Let ’em stare,’ replied the poet placidly. ‘Alfred,’ said my father, ‘people will think you’re Longfellow.’ Down went the feet.

My father and a friend were once at Harewood, and it occurred to them that they would like to see a certain local celebrity known as the Airedale Poet. They accordingly inquired at the Harewood Arms, where this sylvan laureate was to be found. ‘I think they’d be able to tell you round at the stables, sir,’ said the landlord. Accordingly they repaired to the yard and consulted a stable-boy, who, by way of reply, merely put his hollowed hands to his mouth

and shouted, ‘Slush !’ which, it appeared, was the familiar name by which the poet went. In answer appeared a slovenly, unkempt individual, who became the willing recipient of a pot of ale. At a party at The Grange somewhere about 1856, where Tennyson was the object of much extravagant worship, Carlyle, with caustic humour, remarked to my father, ‘It reminds one of your old friend Slush.’

One bitter wintry day at The Grange, Carlyle sat in an anteroom between the hall and the drawing-room with only Lady Ashburton, Mrs. Carlyle, and my father. From the pitiless inclemency of the day, he took occasion to relate how, when he was a child of four, his parents had given him an earthenware ‘thrift-pot,’ a sort of bottle without mouth, but a slit in the side to slip pennies in. Somehow he had been left alone in the house ; there came to the door a beggar man, pale, weary, worn, and hungry, dripping with wet. ‘I climbed on the kitchen table,’ said Carlyle, ‘and reached down the “thrift-pot” from its shelf, and gave him all that was in it—some four pence. *I never in all my life felt anything so like heaven as the pity I had for that man.*’

Speaking of the writer of Εἰκὼν βασιλικη, Carlyle said he was the most portentously self-righteous mortal ever extant on this planet, who seemed to say to the Almighty, in place of asking for His grace

and mercy : ‘O Lord, I have attained to such a pitch of heavenly perfection that I fear it is not even in Thy power to make me any better than I am ; but if at any time Thou shouldest find an opportunity for adding a little finish and perfectness to my many excellencies, I should feel obliged to Thee.’

Once, when he and my father were visiting the National Portrait Gallery, when it was in Exhibition Road, Carlyle, after contemplating for a time Wilkie’s very repulsive portrait of George IV., in which he is portrayed as a tall Highlander, with full costume and appurtenances, surmounted by a face expressive of everything selfish, corrupt, abominable, and bad, exclaimed in irony, not unmixed with pity, ‘ Archangel, though in ruin !’

At the peace demonstrations after the Crimean victories my father was with Carlyle and many others on the top of Bath House, Piccadilly, to see the fireworks. Carlyle turned to him with a look of half-pity, half-contempt of the childish delight which so many were taking in the celebration of ‘so many souls of heroes’ in sulphur and saltpetre. ‘Ah,’ he murmured, ‘hell and Tommy.’

Carlyle once observed to my father : ‘Upon the whole, the British public, with its contagious enthusiasms, reminds me of nothing so much as the Gadarene swine. There they are, quietly grubbing

and grunting in search of what pignuts or other aliments may present themselves for their sustenance and comfort, when suddenly the devil enters into them, up go their tails into the sky, and away they go, plunging into bottomless abysses of delirium and confusion and nameless distraction.'

Early in their married life, my father and mother lived in lodgings in Jermyn Street (he was curate at St. James's Church at the time). One evening he unexpectedly brought Thackeray home for dinner, and introduced him to my mother. She was rather overwhelmed by the knowledge that there was nothing in the house but a cold shoulder of mutton. It was too late to contrive anything more elaborate, so, to 'give an air' to the table, she sent her maid to a neighbouring pastrycook's for a dozen tartlets of various kinds. 'Which of these may I give you?' she inquired in due course of Thackeray. 'Thank you, Mrs. Brookfield,' said he, 'I'll have a two-penny one!'

Dickens' strong sympathy gave him an extraordinary memory even for trifles. When my father was given the living of Somerby, near Grantham, both my mother and he rather dreaded the monotony of life in a small country village. Dickens did his best to cheer my mother on the subject. 'Are there *no* old friends living anywhere in the neighbourhood of Somerby?' he inquired. 'Surely there

must be *somebody* you know within ten miles or so?' 'No,' replied my mother mournfully, 'not a single soul. Oh! I think there *is* one acquaintance of my husband's,' she suddenly recollects. 'A Mr. Maddison, I fancy the name is. But he is not an intimate friend. William knows him only very slightly.' 'Ah, but that's all right!' exclaimed Dickens, his whole face brightening. 'You'll find Maddison a delightful resource. You'll discover there's a lot more in Maddison than you ever dreamed there was. Maddison will become a very important factor in your life. Yes, I'm glad you've got Maddison.' And, wringing her heartily by the hand, he went his way. It so happened that my mother did not meet Dickens again for three or four years, till one evening at a crowded party she caught his eye at the other end of the room. His face immediately lit up with a humorous expression, and he picked his way through the crush until he reached her side. 'Well,' he inquired, in an eager undertone, '*and how's Maddison?*'

Although I was always fond of my father from my earliest days, I stood a little in awe of him, and when I came home from school I used to pass his study door and tear upstairs to my mother, with whom I felt more completely at my ease. I am sorry to say it was not until the last three years of his life that I got to know him really intimately.

One evening when I was about fifteen, I was hiding in a lumber-room, surreptitiously smoking, when my father suddenly discovered me. ‘I am astounded,’ he exclaimed gravely, ‘that you, whom I always regarded as a straightforward, right-minded lad, should hide yourself away in this manner to indulge in the clandestine use of that abominable weed tobacco. But since you *have* contracted this odious, paltry, cowardly, indecorous, unsanitary, pestilential habit, and I suppose it’s too late to try and break yourself of it, why not come and smoke sociably with me in my study?’ Thenceforth I sat and smoked with him every night. Many of his stories were, naturally, about the clergy. Here are a few that occur to me at haphazard.

At the time that Prince Albert was put forward as a candidate for the Cambridge Chancellorship, Horace Mansfield said to a London clergyman: ‘Why, I hear that the Bishop of London’ (he who used to be known as the ‘Canterbury Pilgrim’) ‘has written circulars to all the clergy to vote for the Prince.’ ‘You are only partially correct,’ replied the clergyman. ‘His lordship did me the honour to *call upon me*.’

There was a friend of my father, a Mr. Haverfield, a clergyman. He had a glass eye, and had a habit when speaking meditatively of taking out his pencil case and tapping the artificial organ with

audible and most startling effect. This Mr. Haverfield was one day describing to my father certain alterations he proposed to make in the arrangements of his chapel in York Street, and, rubbing his hands with glee at anticipated success, he said : 'I think it will do good to the chapel, set folk talking, bring it into notice, make the seats let,' then, suddenly checking himself, 'besides *higher motives.*'

He told me a story of my great-grandfather, the Rev. M. Preston. He was rather calling to order a young clergyman for preaching a sermon of forty minutes' duration. To which the youthful orator replied : 'But you know, Mr. Preston, St. Paul preached till midnight.' 'Ay,' he replied, with a little of the East Riding dialect, 'but folk fell down dead!'

A curate whom my father knew had a valuable diamond ring which he only allowed himself to wear on Communion days. On one such day, his mind intent upon the jewel, he began : 'If we say that we have no ring, we deceive ourselves,' etc.

'At the marriage of Miss Lucy Lyttelton to Lord Frederick Cavendish, in which I officiated,' said my father, 'we all had to defile into the Jerusalem Chamber through a very low, little, arched door called "the needle's eye." Lord Houghton was walking behind me. "Lord Over-

stone will never get through!" he exclaimed. And, being a tall man, the multi-millionaire did in effect come in contact with the masonry, which caused a laugh. I said : " You'll see *I* shall whip through easily enough." But when another minute brought me to the test, miscalculating the height, I bumped my head violently against the arch, for which I got no pity, only a laugh. " Somebody," said Lord Houghton, " has left you a legacy."

Lord Overstone, my father told me, was once staying in some country house, and in the hall said to some young men who were mustering for a walk : ' Now, what do you young men do with your old hats ? ' Well, replies were various. One gave them to his servant, another left them to get covered with dust and find their way to the dust-heap, etc. ' Well, now,' said Lord Overstone, ' what should you say that hat '—showing his own—' was worth ? ' ' Half a crown,' suggested someone. ' Four and sixpence,' said Lord Overstone. ' I go into a hatter's, select a hat, and then ask how much they will allow me for the old one. Four and sixpence is the answer. And I immediately deposit my old one and assume the new.' ' This will account,' my father used sagely to observe, ' not for three and a half millions, but for more millions than you can count on your fingers.'

' My curate, who was well off,' said my father,

'was driving me one Sunday morning in his dog-cart from Somerby to my chapel at Humby. He was a Conservative, and hated Dissenters. We met a spring-cart full of them on their way to the Ebenezer at Grantham. "Now, there," said he, "is a parcel of Calvinist fellows going to meeting at Grantham. They appear," he added, with orthodox bitterness, "to have forgotten the Divine injunction that you shall not work your horse upon the Sabbath. Tchk! khchkh!" and so gave his own well-fed, handsome beast a stimulating flick in the flank !'

Bishop Blomfield told my father that once, when he was Bishop of Chester, he had occasion to summon before him a good-tempered, dissolute, impracticable parson, whom we will call Mr. Blank, for tipsiness. Mr. Blank urged, in extenuation, that such a thing had only very rarely happened when he was 'on duty.' 'On duty, Mr. Blank!' said the Bishop. 'A clergyman is *always on duty!*' On this Mr. Blank seemed illumined by a new idea. 'A clergyman always on duty! Well, now, that is the most beautiful sentiment and the most unanswerable argument that I ever met with in my life! I trust I shall never forget that'—with more to the same effect. The Bishop, scarcely able to keep countenance, dismissed him, saying, 'If ever this should occur again, I shall have at once to

communicate with you in a more painful way.' Exit Mr. Blank, on which the Bishop burst out laughing. But in the midst of his explosion a tap is heard at the door. Mr. Blank pops his head in again like Paul Pry, and says: 'Well, then, my Lord, if anything should occur again you'll drop me a line.' Exit murmuring, 'A clergyman always on duty.'

My father told me he was present—in the October term of 1829, at Sunday evening chapel at Trinity—when for the last time the profane trick was practised of putting capsicum—or some such thing—on the Vice-Master's Prayer-Book. First came a loud sneeze, followed by some highly-indecorous exclamation. Two or three undergraduates in the secret tittered. Then a second roaring sneeze, with more interjectional rhetoric, at which the titter became more general and the officials looked grave and watchful. Another sneeze—another—and another till the chapel was out of all discipline and Whewell looked like a baffled lion. Another loud explosion, and *everybody*, Whewell included, was overcome and burst into a roar of laughter, after which all subsided.

One Sunday evening my father was engaged by old Canon Repton to read at St. Philip's in place of himself, who had caught cold. The Rev. J. M. C. Bellew was the preacher, and arrived as my father

was putting on his robes. Bellew hummed and hawed with the peculiar hesitation of Macready, whose method he rather cultivated, and asked : ‘Pray—h’m—ah—mn—excuse me, but are you a “total depravity” man?’ ‘Well,’ said my father, ‘the only totally depraved man I know is myself.’ ‘Ah well, then I see it’s all right. I was going to preach upon that subject to-night ; but if you had been a “total depravity” man I have another sermon in that box on the same subject, taking a different view, and rather than disturb your pre-possessions I would have used it. But it’s all right !’

I was always fond of a description my father used to give of a Gunpowder Plot sermon he once heard. ‘One fifth of November,’ he said, ‘I strolled into the old Chelsea Church. A worthy old simpleton preached, whom I long after recognised as officiator at the Brompton Cemetery. His sermon was appropriate to Guy Fawkes’ day, and contained the following words : “Another proof of the insolent and overbearing pretensions of the Romish Church, and the impossibility of reconciling it with the meek and humbling doctrines of Christianity, is that it denies salvation to all who are not members of its own communion ; whereas we know, by certain assurance of Holy Scripture, that none can be saved who are not faithful ad-

herents to our own incomparable liturgy." I put up my hand to hide a smile, and found I was leaning against the monument of Sir Thomas More.'

I was sent to Westminster School in 1871. Dr. Scott was the Headmaster—and a good one, too. He was, I fancy, a greater respecter of the old traditions with which the school was moth-eaten than his successor has turned out to be. Accordingly, the school was a more interesting one in his day, though probably it was less prosperous and less educationally efficacious.

The Queen's Scholars wore—and probably still wear—the oldest-fashioned collegiate gown in existence, made of black cloth with long pointed sleeves. A small bullet was usually stitched into the extremity of each of these, and they were called 'bullies,' and employed punitively across the knuckles of smaller boys. Whenever a Queen's Scholar passed the oak table in the drawer of which the birches lay, which stood near the top of the big schoolroom, he was bound in honour to strike it with his 'bully.' When at the end of the week a certain number of boys had to be 'handed' (a rather barbarous punishment, inflicted generally for unpunctuality; it consisted in swishing the malefactor over the back of his fist in the presence of the whole school), the senior who brought the rods

to the Headmaster never sullied his fingers by touching them, but carried them deftly swathed in the folds of his sleeve. Every boy carried his own ink-bottle, called a 'dip.' It was a small ordinary white glass bottle with no cork, and the ink was contained in a piece of cotton-wool. One soon became extraordinarily adept at filling one's pen from an apparently dry, gray piece of waste. Every new boy on joining the school was allotted a 'substance'; that is to say, a boy in his own form was told off whom he was to follow like a 'shadow,' from whom he should learn by watching what to do and where to go and when. Also, every new boy who didn't chance to drift naturally into a fight during his first term was matched with another of about the same size and weight, and sent 'up Green' to show what he was made of. But I am afraid Westminster in my time did not rank high in the way of sports. Rowing was an achievement of the past; I think it was in 1845 that Westminster last beat Eton on the river. Before that, however, she more than held her own. There was a legend in my day, which I believe to be true, that the colours of both Eton and Westminster were originally pink, and that a race was rowed between the rival eights to decide which should retain that colour and which should change to light blue, and that Westminster won. I think there can be no

question that Eton was aesthetically the gainer by the change.

My father took me, on February 27, 1872, to St. Paul's Cathedral to the service of thanksgiving for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid fever. I remember, as we made our way along the Strand, a detachment of Life Guards came along, and a very diminutive Radical contrived to dodge under the arm of a policeman and get into the road alongside of these magnificent soldiers. 'You wuthless rogues!' he exclaimed, 'eatin' yer 'eads off out of the pockets of the workin' man! *Who* pays for yer 'orses and yer 'elmets and yer tin bellies? Why, I do! I and the down-trodden workin' classes! While our wives and children are sta-a-a-a-rvin', you're livin' on the fat of the land!' At this juncture a huge trooper dropped his bridle, and without moving a muscle of his face—without even looking at the foaming little orator—clutched him by the middle, somewhere, and held him straight out at arm's length without any apparent effort, the demagogue twisting and writhing like a worm. Then, after proceeding about twenty yards, the soldier extended his great white-gloved hand and dropped the little fellow into the gutter. I never saw a crowd better pleased than the onlookers at this practical though mute rejoinder.

I think it was upon a street banner that the well-

known couplet appeared, in reference to His Royal Highness's recovery :

'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow !
Praise Drs. Jenner, Gull and Lowe !'

But the division of thanks—implying a division of labour—reminds me of a sermon upon faith which always pleased my father. 'The most remarkable instance in history of implicit faith,' said the preacher, 'is the trusting manner in which Moses undertook to lead the Israelites across the burning desert guided only by a cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. But the judicious law-giver also availed himself of the services of his brother-in-law Hobab, who was intimately acquainted with the route across the desert.'

I crossed from Calais to Dover when I was about fourteen years old with my mother, and we had the unique honour of travelling with *both* the Protestant Archbishops—Tait and Thomson. They were brave in all the archiepiscopal panoply of aprons, gaiters, and rosettes. We had a very rough crossing—so rough that a very few minutes after we had left the French port there came a premonitory tap, and the window of my mother's deck cabin was lowered from outside, and the curly, bedecked hat of the Archbishop of York discreetly bowed into the apartment, and from beneath its generous brim

a voice of pride, modulated by charity, proclaimed, ‘ My brother of Canterbury has already succumbed,’ and the window was drawn up again.

The captain allowed me to stand by his side on the bridge. It was one of the old-fashioned small boats—the *Foam*, perhaps.

The vessel gave a sudden lurch as we neared Dover, and I was thrown over the brass rail, against which I was leaning, and fell on my head against a brass-bound hatchway. Everybody was most kind. I was picked up and bandaged, and as the passengers trooped up the gangway at Dover the Archbishop of Canterbury (recovered from, and fortified by, the penance of sea-sickness) was especially good-natured in assisting me. I had two impediments—a hat-box, containing a schoolboy top-hat, and a handbag full of illicit Tauchnitz novels. The amiable prelate relieved me of the latter, not knowing what he did, and in blameless error carried the contraband bundle past the Customs house officials, who piously saluted England’s supreme ecclesiastic, while they waylaid his invalid protégé, and made me expose the innocent interior of my hat-box before they would inscribe upon it their *nihil obstat* in the form of chalk-mark.

CHAPTER II

I leave school—Paris and the Palais Royal—The *Examiner*—I make the acquaintance of a promising young man—The Savile Club—Besant—Rudyard Kipling—A village editor—Robert Louis Stevenson—The Rabelais Club—Sir Frederick Pollock and Lord Houghton—George Venables and Francis Garden.

IN 1873 I succeeded in persuading my family that I was too delicate to remain at school. I accordingly left Westminster, and practically followed my own devices for a couple of years. I attended a few lectures at King's College, London, and went to a good many theatres ; I also contrived, somehow or other, to go over frequently to Paris. My favourite theatre there was the Palais Royal, where there was certainly an unrivalled company of comedians—Geoffroy, L'Heritier, Gil Perez, Hyacinth, Brasseur, and a comparative lad called Lasouche, who, I see, is now seventy-something ; he was severely injured in an accident a little while back, I was sorry to see. I used to watch these old men over their *mazagrans* at the Cent Mille Colonnes or one of the cheap restaurants in the Place du Palais

Royal. At about five or ten minutes before the rise of the curtain they would toddle off to their theatre, and, with no more alteration in their appearance than was achieved by a daub of vermillion on each cheek and a touch of black to the eyelids, they would come on to the stage and keep one in an almost painful convulsion of laughter till the fall of the curtain.

It was at this period that I started writing. Minto, who afterwards became a Professor at the Aberdeen University, was editor of the *Examiner*, and he used very kindly to give me novels to review. Being myself barely seventeen years of age, I used generally to begin my notices, 'This is evidently the work of a very young writer.' I subsequently became dramatic critic, but was presently superannuated, and retired, covered with honour, at the age of eighteen. The staff of the *Examiner* used to foregather on one evening every month under the auspices of the hospitable Minto, when I used to have the pleasure of meeting Andrew Lang, Edmund Gosse, Walter Pollock, A. J. Duffield, young Justin McCarthy, and others. I once met there a singular young man, who attracted a good deal of attention for a short time—a certain Hector Gordon. He was about two-and-twenty. He was extremely clever. He had passed well for the Civil Service ; he wrote not only for the *Examiner*,

but for more than one of the weekly papers, and was looked upon in literary circles as a young man who would go far.

Although he had no apparent vices—he did not squander money on clothes, or gamble, or keep up expensive establishments—still, he was extravagant. He gave excellent dinners at the Café Royal ; he never walked a hundred yards, but always took a hansom ; he went abroad whenever he felt inclined, and always stayed at the best hotels. But nobody wondered whence he got his means. He was simply accepted as an agreeable change from the ordinary young man of letters who is always in want of five pounds.

I once went to Paris with him for a short holiday. I put up at a little hotel in the Rue du Dauphin ; he took a suite of rooms at the Mirabeau in the Place Vendôme. I got out with him at his hotel when we arrived. He immediately summoned the head-waiter. ‘Are you the head-waiter?’ he asked when that intendant appeared. ‘Yes, sir,’ replied the man. ‘I shall be staying here for some time most likely,’ said Gordon, ‘so please see that I’m properly waited upon.’ And he gave the man an English five-pound note. The man made a profound reverence and withdrew, walking backwards. In a few minutes it was all over the hotel that an English milord had arrived who shed bank-notes

broadcast. As we walked together along a corridor, or came downstairs, or crossed the hall, everyone bowed—chambermaids, waiters, boots, page, clerks, landlord. Even other visitors in the hotel caught the infection, and slightly inclined their heads.

We had a very pleasant few weeks in Paris. We used to ride in the Bois, breakfast at Voisin's, dine at the Maison Dorée, go to a theatre, and finish our night at the Café Américain or Tortoni's.

One morning when I called for my friend—it was about our second week in Paris—I found him in his dressing-gown pacing up and down his salon, pale with fury, and the manager trembling before him. ‘Believe me, sir—I regret very much,’ the man was saying, ‘but it is the rule of the hotel to present the bill once a week. This is already the second week. And there are the seats for the theatre, and the saddle-horses, and one day, when monsieur had come downstairs without his purse, there was an advance from the *caisse*, and—’ ‘Very well, then,’ said Gordon. ‘Bring me my bill on Saturday—this very next Saturday, mind—and I’ll leave your infernal hotel, and go somewhere where they know how to behave.’ ‘As you please, sir,’ said the manager, retiring with a rueful expression. ‘Very sorry, but it is the rule of the hotel.’ ‘Well, young man,’ said Hector, turning to me with a sunny smile, ‘where shall we ride to-day?’

'Were you having a row?' I asked, rather needlessly. 'Oh no, nothing to speak of,' replied my friend. 'The fellow was rather cheeky about his bill. But I don't know that I shall *really* leave them; I'm very comfortable here.'

The next day I looked in. The salon was empty, so I went through to the bedroom. There I found three chambermaids in tears; an honest-looking fellow in a blue apron which reached from his chest to his toes, with a huge *plumeau*, also weeping, and the manager in the depths of despair. 'I assure you, Mr. Gorronne,' he was saying to my friend, who was sitting up in bed, an empty stud-case in his hand, 'all the seven years I have been here never has such a thing happened before—never, never!' 'Then, who was it dusted the room yesterday morning?' asked Gordon. 'Mais moi, monsieur,' said the man-servant with the woful countenance. 'Mais je ne suis pas un voleur, moi! Ah non! Je suis un honnête homme!' And he relapsed into tears. 'And it was I was making the bed,' said one of the girls. 'Let them search my boxes if they suspect me of this infamy.' 'It's very unfortunate,' said Gordon. 'It's not the actual value of the studs; I don't suppose the three of them are worth more than four or five thousand francs. But they were a present to me from old Queen Isabella, and I have associations with them.'

Well, you can go now. Let me know when the *agent de sûreté* arrives.' And the melancholy quartette filed out. While my friend was dressing I couldn't help wondering *why* Queen Isabella of Spain should have presented Hector Gordon with diamond studs, and why they should have been given in a case bearing the name and address of 'Tyndal, shirtmaker, Brompton Road, London.' However, the incident appeared to give a fresh fillip to my friend's credit at the Mirabeau, for his bill was not presented during the remaining ten days of his stay ; and it must have amounted to far more than the value of the box or two he left behind when a telegram suddenly called him to Turin.

The next I heard of my hospitable but misguided young friend was a few years later. I learnt that there was a hue and cry after him, and that he was being chased by the police of all nations from capital to capital, from pillar to post. And at last they caught him, and he got five years' penal servitude. Time went on, as is its wont, and I rarely gave a thought to the ill-starred Hector Gordon and his singularly curtailed career, when one evening, soon after eleven, as I was walking up the Haymarket, and the audience were pouring out of the theatre, I caught sight of him. He was faultlessly dressed, and as we mutually recognised one another he

dropped his eyes and hurried down the street. I pursued him and slapped him on the back. ‘How are you, Hector?’ I exclaimed. ‘It’s awfully good of you to speak to me,’ he replied, with some emotion. ‘On the contrary,’ I said, ‘it’s awfully good of you to speak to me. You’ve done your five years; I haven’t done mine.’

It must have been in about 1875 that the committee of the Savile Club paid me the honour of election. Their house was then in Savile Row. I believe the Savile was originally a doctors’ club. I know there was a superstition prevalent among the non-scientific members that the smoking-room at the back of the house, with its top light, had in its time served as a dissecting-room, and that the physiological members used to fill in their spare moments after luncheon or tea by a little desultory autoptical investigation. If the sealing-wax were missing from the writing-room, we obstinately suspected it had been used by the hall-porter to display the arterial system of some surreptitious subject that the doctors must have smuggled in at some time when they had the club to themselves.

The club jester was old Duffield, a most convivial and entertaining companion with a Michael Angelo head. He had travelled a great deal, and seen many things, and got to believe he had seen a great many more. We were all sincerely sorry when he

died. Walter Besant used generally to lunch with us once a week. He was extraordinarily kind in encouraging me to write ; that is to say, the great kindness he showed and the pains he took would have been extraordinary in anyone else. But Besant, who was a very busy man, could always find time to help those who sought him, even strangers. I told him that I could sit down and write a review of a novel where the lines to go upon were all ready laid down, but that I had not the faintest idea how to sit down and launch into a story. ‘ Lay out your writing materials,’ said Besant—‘ plenty of paper and blotting-paper and ink and pens ; then make it a rule to sit in front of these every morning from eleven till one. You’ll soon find you *have* to write, in sheer desperation.’ I did as he told me, and I soon acquired a fatal facility. But his goodness did not stop there. He read through half a dozen of my stories in manuscript—that is to say, in actual handwriting, for typewriters were not in those days available—and advised me as to placing them.

I remember one of the stories—‘A Superior Animal’—which was ‘syndicated’ by Besant’s able friend, Mr. Watt ; that is to say, it appeared in a number of local papers in different parts of the country, so that I received about four times as much for it as I should have been paid by any solitary

editor. I was correcting a proof of this effort in the solitude of the card-room one afternoon, when Rudyard Kipling came in and asked to look at it. He spoke most kindly of the tale, but had many suggestions to make with regard to the telling. ‘Don’t you see how much stronger that would be?’ he asked after suggesting an excision and a transposition. ‘D’you mind if I alter it?’ And, so saying, he whipped out a pencil and set to work; and having once put his hand to the plough, so to speak, he persevered, and in a few minutes the whole virgin expanse of proof was furrowed and hoed and harrowed and manured and top-dressed by the master. I packed up and despatched the corrected sheet there and then.

The result was unexpected. I received a most abusive letter from the editor, saying that if I imagined his compositors had nothing better to do than to try and decipher Chinese puzzles I was gravely mistaken; that they had been put to great inconvenience to fill in at the last moment the space my story should have occupied; that they certainly shouldn’t use it now, and were extremely sorry they had paid for it; and that they were writing to Mr. Watt to complain. I had not the Christianity to write and tell the editor that what he was discarding as worthless rubble was, in reality, sparkling with Kipling nuggets.

'A Superior Animal' appeared also in the *Bristol Times and Mirror*. It had (originally) a most artistic, unconventional, and thrilling finish, of which I was duly proud. When I saw it in the West-Country paper I found an entirely unauthorized, commonplace, and impotent conclusion, which annoyed me excessively. I wrote, accordingly, an icy letter to the office, asking how it came about that the termination of a story appearing over my name had been altered without my sanction. I received a curt note from the sub-editor, saying that he didn't know who I was ; that the only individual he recognised in the transaction was Mr. Watt ; and that he 'put an end to the story because it didn't appear to have one.' I wrote back and said :

'DEAR SIR,

'The village editor has no more right to adulterate a story than the village grocer has to sand the sugar, though I am aware that the custom prevails in both cases.'

This closed the correspondence.

I remember the first time I saw Robert Louis Stevenson at the Savile ; his 'get-up' was perfectly astounding. His hair was smooth and parted in the middle and fell beyond the collar of his coat ; he wore a black flannel shirt, with a curious, knitted

tie twisted in a knot ; he had Wellington boots, rather tight, dark trousers, a pea-jacket and a white sombrero hat (in imitation, perhaps, of his eminent literary friend, Mr. W. E. Henley). But the most astounding item of all in his costume was a lady's sealskin cape, which he wore about his shoulders, fastened at the neck by a fancy brooch, which also held together a bunch of half a dozen daffodils. I cannot but think these final touches to his toilet must have been added by loving hands without his knowledge or consent.

He and I soon became friends. He was a most charming companion, for, in addition to all his marvellous endowments of imagination and humour, he had a gift of ready sympathy, which enabled him to enter with extraordinary thoroughness into whatever you might disclose to him. I am sure, too, that he could have written delightful and dramatic plays had he chosen to give his undivided attention to such work.

He had also a very fascinating, childish side to his character. He described to me how, on one occasion, out in the Far West, in the land of miners and gamblers and cow-punchers, the whim seized him to impersonate a desperado. So, in an absolutely foolhardy manner this frail, slight young Scot swaggered down the middle of the principal street with as fierce an air as he could assume, and when

anyone approached on the ‘side-walk’ he would make a start and place his hand sharply behind his right hip as if about to draw a revolver (though he didn’t possess such a thing in the world), whereat the stranger would turn deadly pale and hold up both hands over his head ; upon which Stevenson would mutter incoherently and reel on. It was by the mercy of God he was not shot dead.

I was in his company at the moment that he conceived the germ of the idea of ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.’ He was inveighing against a man with whom he had done business and with whose methods he was dissatisfied. The man’s name was Samuel Creggan, or something like it. ‘He’s a man who trades on the Samuel,’ Stevenson declared in his rather finikin, musical Scot’s voice. ‘He receives you with Samuel’s smile on his face ; with the gesture of Samuel he invites you into a chair ; with Samuel’s eyes cast down in self-depreciation he tells you how well satisfied his clients have always been with his dealings ; but every now and again you catch a glimpse of the Creggan peeping out like a white ferret. Creggan’s the *real* man ; Samuel’s only superficial.’

I once heard a celebrated preacher at Trinity Church, Sloane Street, deliver a very eloquent sermon on the text of Stevenson’s fable. The fervour with which he dilated upon the two natures

that exist in everyone, and upon man's impotence sometimes to control the ascendancy of the ' Hyde' side over the ' Jekyll' side, recurred vividly to my mind a little while later when the unhappy clergyman was brought before his Bishop and given three hours in which to pack up and leave the country on account of his evil life.

Besant and the Pollocks and a few other members of the Savile started a dinner club, to which I belonged, called the Rabelais. It was a very pleasant little association until it grew large and priggish, when it presently died of stiff-neckedness. When Irving decided to go to America, it was the Rabelais Club which gave him his first farewell dinner. The late Sir Frederick Pollock was in the chair, and Lord Houghton was a distinguished guest. The chairman rose, and, in the measured, somewhat nasal tones which many of us remember with affection, delivered an old-fashioned, scholarly, and admirably balanced panegyric on our great tragedian. But the dinner had been unduly prolonged, and Lord Houghton had evidently become bored with the banquet. He was sitting back in his chair mouthing in a droll way he had, and passing his hand wearily over his head backwards and forwards, which was a favourite trick of his. At last Sir Frederick got to his peroration. 'But, after all, where is our friend Irving going? He is *not* going, like the

intrepid Captain Nares, to face the rigours of the Arctic Zone, to brave the perils of icebergs and polar bears in search of the North Pole ; he is *not* going to China to enchant and soften the heart of the cruel Celestial by the magic of his art ; he is *not* going to the Antipodes, where, if we are to believe tradition, people are in the habit of—’ At this moment Lord Houghton—who, as a rule, had the most perfect manners of any man in London—was overcome by impatience, and exclaimed : ‘ Of course he isn’t. He’s going to America—to the city of New York. He’s going by the Cunard ; it’ll take him just about a week.’ Poor Sir Frederick was so flabbergasted that he was unable to get back into the stream of his discourse. He merely muttered, ‘ Let us drink health and prosperity and a safe return to our friend Henry Irving,’ and sat down with a clouded brow.

The men of that generation—verbal epicures like the late Sir Frederick Pollock, like George Stovin Venables, and the Rev. Francis Garden—were extremely impatient of interruption. I remember once at dinner in a country house Mr. Venables had been the last to come down. He commenced, as soon as we had finished our soup, to describe how his watch had been at fault, and how he had suddenly discovered he was late for dinner. ‘ I extinguished the candle in my room,’ he went on to say, ‘ and hurried along the corridor, guiltily

conscious that I should in all probability prove to be the last. At the end of the passage, however, I came to a short staircase, and in the dim light I perceived there was a corresponding flight opposite to me, and that a companion in misfortune was hurrying down like myself, two steps at a time, eager to curtail as far as possible the inconvenience our hostess might be suffering. I paused for a second, and so did he. "I am relieved to find, sir," I exclaimed, "that I have a fellow-culprit to share the reproaches which unpunctuality undoubtedly provokes." My *vis-à-vis* preserved a churlish silence.'

Mr. Garden, who was getting tired of this anecdote, here chimed in: 'I suppose it turned out to be a looking-glass?'

Mr. Venables gave an almost imperceptible wince, but proceeded, without appearing to hear the interruption: "'I trust I am not taking too great a liberty, sir,' I went on, 'in venturing to jest with a stranger? If so, pray accept my apologies.' I advanced, he appeared to do the same, and I discovered I was face to face with—'

'With a looking-glass!' exclaimed Mr. Garden again. 'Of course! I knew what was coming!'

'With a *mirror*!' said Mr. Venables with emphatic asperity, determined not to admit that he had been anticipated.

CHAPTER III

Cambridge—The long-haired Achæans—The free-thinking students and the Senior Dean—The ‘Bucks’—‘Bank’—An averted misalliance—A Cambridge riot—Instruction in the use of the truncheon by the late Master of Trinity—My University distinction—My uncle Joseph—Weston’s walk through Cambridge—Dick Mason’s—Cricket at Fenner’s—My ‘annual average 10.’

IT was in the October of 1875 that I went to Trinity College, Cambridge. Although the details of University life may vary from generation to generation its broad lines probably remain much the same. And into however many little coteries undergraduates may elect to group themselves, there must always be the two main divisions—those who work and those who play. There have been, of course, rare but conspicuous instances of men who have excelled in their Triposes as well as in the sports; but as a rule, in my time, the reading men confined their exercise to a long walk or a pull on the river, while the sporting enthusiasts were content to put themselves in the hands of ‘Big Smith’ (now, alas! no more), who would generally

succeed in just luffing them safe into the harbour of an ordinary degree. The principal relaxation of the scholars appeared to be political discussion. There was a society called the Chit-Chat Club, which met once a week in the rooms of one or other of its members to discuss a prearranged subject—social, political, or philosophical. It was an offshoot, I fancy, of another debating society called the Magpie and Stump, where the late Lord Colin Campbell, two of the Balfours, Spring Rice, Macaulay, Parker Smith, Richmond Ritchie, and others, were shining lights. The sporting undergraduates entertained a poor opinion of the ‘long-haired division,’ as those were called who cultivated their intellects sometimes to the neglect of their appearance and manners, while these held the former in at least equal contempt. Each had their faults and merits, and the ‘extremists’ of either party were equally ridiculous. But I notice, now that about a quarter of a century has passed, that quite as many of the hare-brained set have achieved eminence and distinction in politics and the learned professions as of those who looked on the Tripos as the *Ultima Thule* of their ambition.

Malthus Roy was an exaggerated type of these young philosophers. He affected a brown velveteen coat and a peacock-blue tie, which gave him the appearance of an æsthetic poacher. I heard him

remark on one occasion, ‘For seven years I was a cynic, but Ruskin cured me.’ As he was then only twenty, the cure was presumably a recent one. One day Malthus Roy received, to his great disgust, the ordinary printed notification from his Dean, the Rev. E. H. Staunton, stating that he appeared to have been irregular in his attendance at chapel, and requesting that he would be more regular for the future. ‘This is too preposterous!’ exclaimed Malthus. ‘It is incredible that such meddlesome sacerdotalism should be permitted in this nineteenth century. I’ve no doubt Staunton is a well-meaning, conscientious man, according to his lights; but let him confine himself to his own little sphere. How dare he endeavour to control my liberty of conscience?’ ‘I suppose,’ one of us suggested, ‘it’s his duty—in a way, poor chap!—to try and enforce, as far as he can, the disciplinary rules of the college.’ ‘It’s not a question of discipline,’ retorted Malthus; ‘it’s a question of ethics. The only way I can see to put an end to this pestering is simply to write to him, once and for all, and tell him that religious problems have had their proper share, among others, of my serious study and consideration, and discover to him the conclusions to which I have arrived.’ ‘It’s an awful responsibility,’ said another of Roy’s friends, after a moment’s silence, ‘to upset a man’s religion—however puerile and inadequate you may

know it to be—unless you are certain he has a brain capable of absorbing scientific truth, or, at all events, *something* in its place.' 'I can't help that,' said the relentless Malthus; 'he's brought it on himself. He took the initiative in sending me this *medievally* impertinent reprimand.' We sat and quaked as Malthus Roy took his place at his writing-table and deliberately indited his profession of infidelity, which cartel he was about to hurl into the blameless sanctum of the Rev. E. H. Staunton. We shuddered to think of the night of sleepless agony which that worthy scholar and cleric would spend when his simple faith in his Creator, in heaven—when all that he cherished and worshipped—should be pulverized and blown into space by the hideous but overwhelming logic of Malthus Roy. We pictured him throwing up his Fellowship, casting off his sable clothes and his clerical collar, and arriving in a suit of light-coloured dittoes to beseech the young philosopher to give him some kind of code to take the place of the shattered belief which had been so much to him. When the iconoclast had covered six or seven sheets with close handwriting, he read his letter out to us. It began thus:

'DEAR SIR,

'There is a time in every man's life when he must think for himself with regard to religious

matters. In the first place, it must be patent to anyone endowed with ordinary powers of reasoning——' etc.

And he gradually unfolded his views. At this distance of time I forget what they were, and so most likely has he. They were certainly atheistic, and a good deal flavoured with Darwinism. 'Don't —don't send it,' pleaded more than one of us; 'or at all events, modify it. Poor Staunton! he's not a bad fellow.' Malthus only smiled superciliously, stuck up his letter, and bade his bed-maker see to its delivery. On the following morning he received the following brief reply from the Dean :

' DEAR SIR,

' I quite agree with you that there is a time in every man's life when he must think for himself with regard to religious matters. But you must allow me to question whether that period has been reached by an undergraduate in his second year of residence. I must accordingly repeat my request that you will be more careful in conforming with the rules of the college.

' I remain, dear sir,

' Yours very truly,

' E. H. STAUNTON, Senior Dean.'

As a contrast to Malthus Roy, there was a

conspicuous character in the 'fast' set—young Hugh Razzell. His only conspicuous fault was that he was rather more astute than became his tender years. He was at Magdalene, if I recollect rightly, rather a sporting college in those days. Although his allowance from home cannot have been more than £250 or £300 a year, he belonged to all the extravagant clubs in the University; he was always faultlessly dressed, and he kept a pony and trap. He made no secret of his way of increasing his income—a method which would not have been tolerated in anyone less amusing and accomplished. He made a book, and openly laid a point under the odds to any amount. But to an undergraduate it is a matter of very little moment whether he is laid sixes or fives, and Hugh was always to be found and always to be depended on to pay if he lost. In addition to this, Hugh kept what was practically a 'hell.' That is to say, he had a magnificent dinner for eight or ten sent in every evening from Breuvet's, to which all were welcome on the understanding that they played 'bank' (which was practically trente-et-quarante) afterwards. Hugh, of course, was banker. I forget how the Cambridge way of playing differed from the Monte Carlo game. I think it was in case of an *après*. But I know that the odds were well in favour of the bank. In my time the play was

very high. I once saw a boy of one-and-twenty put down £1,000 in one stake. He is now a well-to-do merchant with a large family. One night, when play was expected to be high, Roddie Muggridge (the son of Lord Muggridge) shared a bank with Hugh. They declared a bank of a hundred pounds, fifty each, and play began. But, by some extraordinary chance, on this particular occasion fortune favoured the players. In a very short time the bank was broken. After a consultation between the partners, Hugh proposed that the players should 'give the bank a chance,' that they should continue to punt against an unlimited bank which would pay in paper redeemable next day. But luck was dead against Hugh and Roddie, and at midnight, when the party broke up (Razzell and Muggridge lived in lodgings) they had lost another £1,200 pounds. The next morning I called on Hugh Razzell at about nine o'clock. He was sitting, cheerful and rosy, making a hearty breakfast, with the *Sporting Life* propped against the teapot in front of him. We chatted on general topics, when suddenly there entered to us Roddie Muggridge. He was still in his evening clothes, and his eyes were swollen. Poor little boy! he had been crying all night.

'Oh, Hugh!' he moaned, 'what *are* we to do?'

'My dear chap, sit down,' said Hugh kindly.

'Have a brandy-and-soda. What's your trouble? Can't you find the ready?'

'I shall have to ask my governor for it. He'll pay up at last, I'm certain. But goodness knows how long he'll take. And we've got to weigh in this afternoon.'

'How much time do you want?' asked Hugh, unlocking a despatch-box, and producing a bill-stamp which chanced to be there. 'Three months, six months?'

'D'you mean to say *you* can manage it for me?' cried Roddie. 'I say, you *are* a good chap! Three months will be ample. I expect the governor will send it in a few days, only he may have to sell out or something.'

'There you are,' said Hugh. 'Just write the acceptance across there. That's it.'

And he returned the bill to his despatch-box.

'I shall never forget your kindness, Hugh, never!' said Roddie, as he wrung his friend by the hand.

A little later Hugh Razzell assembled his guests of the previous night. 'Look here, you fellows,' he exclaimed, with a winning smile, 'I think we all rather lost our heads last night. You played on to do us a good turn, and it happened just the other way about. However, I'm not going to ask for any favours, only £1,200's a lot of money, and wants

a bit of finding, so I thought I'd just ask you which you'd prefer—£800 ready, down on the nail, in full discharge, of course ; or one bill for £600 at three months, and another at six, with interest for keeping you waiting, if you like ?' The first offer of £800 was accepted with acclamation, and as the party broke up, each with his thirteen and fourpence in the pound, all spoke in the highest terms of Razzell. ' Devilish straight chap, old Hugh !' But the shrewd young financier stuck to poor old Lord Muggridge's £600 when it duly arrived in the course of a couple of posts.

Finch's were the lodgings where Hugh and Roddie lived, and I think one or two other young dandies. They were the smart lodgings at that time. There was a parlour-maid there called Sabina Tebbs, a very pretty girl, and I believe a very good girl, too. The impressionable Roddie fell desperately in love with her, and at last fell upon his knees one day, when she was clearing away the remains of luncheon, and, Jove-like, proposed marriage to her in a shower of crumbs. Then came the task of breaking the news to his father (I wonder if Lord Muggridge has preserved all his son's correspondence during his pupilage at Cambridge?). He took considerable pains over the letter, which he was determined should be respectful but firm. He said in the course of it :

'I am conscious that you may consider the step I am taking to be unconventional—that you may at first deem the apparent difference of rank between Miss Tebbs and myself a serious obstacle. But I would never submit to an alliance of policy. The heart is, after all, the truest guide. And although, should you decide to consent to our union, I shall dearly esteem and prize your approval, I may say at once, with all filial respect, that, should you elect to oppose it your disapprobation will be absolutely indifferent to me, and your expostulations will fall upon deaf ears. . . . Miss Tebbs loves me *for myself*, regardless of my family (though I am sure my mother and Ermyntrude will take to her at once), and I love her *for herself*, regardless of her family. . . . We shall be married this day month, Miss Tebbs—Sabina—having intimated to Mr. and Mrs. Finch that her relations with them will cease on that day. . . . Trusting that, as a man of the world, you will see that I am acting wisely in doing as I feel inclined,

'I remain,

'Your affectionate and dutiful son,
'RODDIE.'

'Sabina sends love to all.'

Lord Muggridge read this filial effusion with his other letters at breakfast the following morning. He betrayed no emotion, did not mention its

purport to his family, but, after a very solid breakfast, he went into his study and rang for the butler, an old functionary who had been in the family for over thirty years. ‘Oh, Jarman,’ said his lordship carelessly, ‘there’s a letter there from Master Roddie. Just attend to it, will you?’ ‘Very good, my lord,’ said the old servant.

The Hon. Rodney Muggridge must be getting on for fifty now. He has an accomplished wife of his own rank, and a quiverful of beautiful children ranging in age from twenty-five to three. He has diplomatically represented his country in various parts of the world. But I doubt if he has ever felt smaller or more ridiculous than at the moment when the door of his Cambridge sitting-room opened and admitted—not an unforgiving parent bubbling over with anathema, but the old family butler, who only a few years before had ‘dandled him on his knee,’ beaming with faithful, deferential patronage. ‘Now then, Master Roddie,’ he said, with a broad grin, ‘whatever ludickerousness have you been up to *this* time?’ What further steps the old seneschal took, I don’t know. But a week or two later Sabina Tebbs, charmingly attired, was attracting a fashionable clientèle to a select little divan at Weston-super-Mare (in which town she presently married a veterinary surgeon), and Roddie was cruising about the isles of Greece in his uncle’s yacht.

I wonder if the conflicts between a few townsmen and a few undergraduates still take place on the fifth of November? They had become very mild, perfunctory affairs in my time. But we had a great excitement, if not on the fifth, at about that date, during my time at Cambridge. The Mayor was a Mr. Death, who was, or had been, a livery-stable keeper. On the evening of his installation he attended a concert at the Guildhall, magnificent in his mayoral robes. But, *rien n'est sacré pour un étudiant*, and four or five undergraduates in the body of the hall, instead of being awed by Mr. Death's civic splendour, were provoked to laughter. They even addressed his worship in familiar terms—asked him what he fed his horses on, and why he didn't poleaxe the lot and give the cat a feed; bade him take his chain of office up two holes higher on the near side, and so on. Mr. Death turned as purple as his mantle at this gross *lèse-majesté*, lost his temper, sent the police to arrest the scoffers, and had them locked up for the night. The following evening three or four hundred undergraduates assembled in the market-place and held an indignation meeting. As luck would have it, in the middle of the discussion there was a sound of wheels, and the Mayor's carriage and pair hove in sight. In no time we had stopped the horses and made our enemy prisoner. Many were for lynching

him on the spot, but the majority decided he should have a fair trial. So we tied him up and locked him up in a neighbouring coach-house, and returned to the Forum to decide upon his punishment. I think the majority were in favour of hanging him at once. The suggestion of first disembowelling him obtained only a very few supporters, mostly students for the History Tripos. Suddenly there appeared on a window-sill of the Guildhall Mr. Mortlock, the banker, who appeared as a kind of Marcus Antonius, only earlier in the proceedings than his august predecessor. ‘Gentlemen, what do you want?’ cried Mr. Mortlock. And four hundred throats yelled in answer: ‘Death!’ The effect was weird in the extreme. Then the banker proceeded to expostulate in tactful terms, and to endeavour to pacify us. At least, such was his apparent object, but we presently discovered his harangue was a ruse. For while he was engaging our attention by his honeyed words the Mayor’s servants were staving open the door of the coach-house, from which they succeeded in rescuing their trembling master, and a minute later the carriage and pair was tearing at full gallop towards the job-master’s mansion. A wild shriek rent the air, ‘Death’s got loose!’ and off we tore in pursuit. The house stood back from the road. It was surrounded, indeed, by a small park enclosed by park railings.

The gates were locked and bolted as soon as the carriage had passed through. But the iron palings went down like matchwood at the impact of the 400 undergraduates. We tore up the slight incline of turf, and were met by a line of police constables with drawn staves. For a few minutes there was some really hard fighting. Several lay stunned with broken heads, and the mob of students were becoming maddened into a really dangerous fury, when suddenly there appeared a small figure clad in a long black silk gown with fluttering white bands at his neck. It was a Proctor. From sheer force of habit, every undergraduate took to his heels. The magisterial presence of this mild little Don effected what the truncheons of the police had failed to do. His moral force entirely routed us.

The following day reinforcements of police arrived from London. The authorities apprehended that the rioting might be renewed, and perhaps on a larger scale and in a better-organized manner. Notices were put up in the various colleges inviting such undergraduates as favoured law and order to enrol themselves as special constables. And here—since I am pledged to tell the truth—I must make a confession. It was not from fear or out of respect for the University authorities; for, with the exception of Dr. Thomp-

son—the Master of Trinity—and the Rev. E. H. Staunton, Senior Dean of that college, I revered none of them. It was not that my indignation at the tyranny of the Mayor, or my sympathy with my fellow-revolutionists, had diminished ; I think I was mainly actuated by a desire to own a truncheon and a blue-striped armlet. But I deserted the cause of freedom, and applied to be sworn in as a ‘special.’ As I was the only undergraduate who did, however, the idea of forming an amateur police force was abandoned.

I breakfasted with Dr. Thompson at the Lodge one morning at about this period. A breakfast with the Master was always an alarming function ; but he was such a charming host—although he never forgot, nor allowed his young guests to forget, his position—that his parties are delightful to look back upon. He was a tall, remarkably handsome old man with a strongly-lined face, a rather olive complexion, silver-white hair, and heavy black eyebrows. I should not think that anyone had ever presumed to take a liberty with him. He told me that *he* had once been enrolled as a special constable, and he described to me the truncheon-drill he had been taught. ‘ You first, with the tip of your stave, strike your man sharply under the chin,’ he said—‘ that causes him to stick out his stomach ; you then give him a thrust in the

middle, which doubles him up; you then strike him as hard as you can on the back of the head, and then he should give you no more trouble.'

My father remembered a private theatrical performance at Cambridge, when they were all undergraduates, in which Thompson played Romeo to the Juliet of Robert Monckton Milnes—afterwards Lord Houghton—the 'Bird of Paradox,' as Mrs. Norton called him. And he could recall when the Tripos list was published, meeting Thompson in the Old Court in bitter tears because he was only fourth classic!

My solitary University distinction was the Winchester Reading Prize, the competition for which took place in the Senate House. It was open to all the University. There was one 'set subject'—Hooker's Sermons, if I recollect rightly. There were over a hundred competitors. Each of us had to mount a rostrum and read the same page in turn, which was rather unfair on him who came first, who happened to be myself. Then we each had to read a portion of the Old Testament, then a piece of Shakespeare, then a piece of prose. After this we were turned out for an hour. At the end of that time we came back to find posted on the doors a list of the best fifty, and these had to return and read in the same way a bit of the New Testament, bits of poetry, and so forth.

After this there was a further selection of a still smaller number. Finally, on the occasion I speak of, the first and second prizes were made into one and equally divided between me and another. The University in due course sent me a cheque—for, I think, £15—to be spent in the purchase of books. I am afraid I acted dishonestly; for I sent a dozen old books, which I had been obliged to buy for my Tripos, to be newly bound ‘on credit,’ and spent the £15 in riotous living. When I called, as I had to do, upon one of the examiners (he was also a Proctor—a Mr. Torry of John’s), with the books to obtain his order to have them stamped with the University Arms, he entered into a very friendly conversation with me. He told me I was very nearly turned out with the first batch because the examiners detected in my reading of Richard Hooker (and I am not surprised) that I had not made a deep study of that learned and judicious divine’s works. Also that they considered my reading of the Scriptures rather too dramatic—that I had given different voices to the various personages, which was considered almost irreverent. I assured him that if I had done so it was unconsciously—which was the truth. ‘Your *name* is familiar, to me, Mr. Brookfield,’ said the Don, as he wrote out the order. ‘Have you by any chance a relation—of about my age—of the name of Joseph? We

were at school together as boys, and I saw a good deal of him for a time, before I took up my Fellowship. He settled in New Zealand twelve or fifteen years ago, and I've heard nothing of him since.' Now, I had no opinion, one way or the other, as to whether I had such a connection or not: my answer might or might not be true. But out of a mixed feeling of nervousness and a desire to be affable I replied: 'Oh yes, sir. It must be my uncle—a younger brother of my father's.' 'Dear me! that's *most* interesting,' said Mr. Torry. 'Did you know him at all?' 'I've no very distinct recollection of him,' I answered, quite truthfully this time. 'I can only have been four or five years old when he left England.' 'Ah, of course, yes! I forgot,' replied the tutor. 'A very good fellow he was. Eccentric—sensitive—brusque in his manner; but a thoroughly good-hearted, genuine man.' And I went away, feeling a glow of pride for my putative kinsman.

Some months afterwards—I think it was the following term—I was hurrying home to Trinity along Jesus Lane. It was nearly midnight, and I was without a cap and gown, when I caught sight of a white-banded Proctor coming towards me, accompanied by his bull-dogs. Flight was impossible. Luckily, I recognised the Rev. Mr. Torry of John's, so I ran up to him, and, with an unscrupulousness bred of peril, I exclaimed breath-

lessly : 'Oh, Mr. Torry, I've just had a letter from Uncle Joseph!' His whole face lighted up at once. 'You *don't* say so!' he exclaimed, as he recognised me. 'Well, well! and how *is* the old chap?' '*Wonderfully* well,' I replied. 'A little rheumatism last winter, but not enough to lay him up.' 'Ah! that he was always liable to,' said Mr. Torry; 'though,' he added, with a wag of the head, 'I've always had a private impression it was *gout* rather than rheumatism. Your uncle wasn't a careful man.' 'Ah, but that's all changed now!' I exclaimed with the desperation of a Shahrazád. 'He's very well looked after now. He's *married*!' 'You *don't* say so!' cried Mr. Torry—'Joseph married! What next! But how lately?' 'Five or six years ago,' I replied. 'There are three children—two boys and a girl. The girl's very delicate, poor little thing! She's causing them a good deal of anxiety.' 'Dear, dear, dear!' exclaimed Mr. Torry sympathetically. 'Let's hope she'll grow out of her weakness as she grows older. By the way,' he added rather shyly—we had reached the end of the lane—'you're—er—not in your academical costume?' No, sir, I know,' I rejoined; 'but I thought you'd be glad to have news of Uncle Joseph. Good-night, sir.' He raised his cap, and I ran home. The excellent man never fined me.

Dull as practical jokes usually are, we perpetrated a fairly amusing one in about 1878 at Cambridge. There was at that time a man called Weston who was walking through England at some prodigious rate—a hundred miles a day, or something of the kind (it may have been less, but my brain reels nowadays at the idea of anything over five). He wore on this expedition a close-fitting suit of velveteen, with knee-breeches, a sombrero hat, a broad ribbon across his body, and he carried a light cane. It was announced that on a certain afternoon Weston would enter Cambridge—via the Newmarket Road and Jesus Lane—at about five o'clock.

I believe it was W. G. Elliot who first conceived the idea of anticipating him. At all events, we selected one of our number who was more or less of Weston's build—I fancy it was 'Peter' Burgess—and procured for him a suit exactly resembling that worn by the pedestrian. We then 'cast' the rest of our number as trainer, doctor, timekeeper, newspaper reporters, etc., and made arrangements to invade the town on the appointed day in these characters. There was a good deal of excitement about Weston's visit. Scaffoldings were erected and rows of seats, and tradespeople let their shop-fronts at remunerative rates, and when the great afternoon came round every corner was crowded.

Shortly before five a little party hove in sight, the athlete in his unmistakable velvet suit, his wide-brimmed hat jauntily cocked, walking with an easy swing, fresh as paint. His trainer beside him carried a bowl of water, and occasionally flicked a few drops in his face or tenderly sponged his mouth. In a dogcart alongside sat a grave-faced doctor (bearing a striking family likeness to the one who a few years later attended Count Vladimir in the play of '*Fédora*' at the Haymarket Theatre), while a timekeeper recorded in monotonous tones each minute as it passed. At the back of the cart two eager reporters were writing in their notebooks at lightning speed.

The cheering was long and loud. At certain points wreaths of laurels and bouquets of rare flowers were hurled at the hero of the hour, but he could only acknowledge these by a graceful touch of the hat with the Wanghee cane he carried; he was obliged to hurry on to keep faith with the public. The floral tributes were placed in the back of the dogcart. At last the party, followed by an enthusiastic crowd which increased at every yard, reached the Bull Hotel. After vociferous acclamation the champion appeared for a moment at the window and said a very few words: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am a walker, not a talker. But I thank you—I thank you—I thank you.' And the window closed—the crowd went home.

At about half-past five, as workmen were taking down the deal stands that stood along Jesus Lane, a shabby, exhausted man appeared, covered in dust, his stockings ungartered, shambling along in evident distress. It was the genuine Weston. But the public wouldn't have him at any price, and greeted him with hoots and missiles. 'Some infernal charlatan,' said one, 'trying to impose upon us. Lucky he didn't come half an hour sooner. He might have taken us in.' 'Not a bit of it,' replied another. 'I've seen the posters. You can see at once ; this chap's not a bit like them.'

I was taken one Sunday afternoon—I think, by poor Charles Mundy—to see a wonderful character—old Dick Mason. I don't know what he had been, or whether he had any trade or calling during the week. But on Sundays he kept open house in a small street turning off King's Parade. I was brought into a large, low-ceilinged room hung with old hunting and racing prints. About half a dozen undergraduates of the second-rate sporting set—the *plebs superiorum*, as it were—were sitting about the room. Amongst them wandered one or two fox terriers and a black Russian poodle. On a mahogany table were champagne and cigars.

Our host stood with his back to the fire, and talked without ceasing in a pleasant, mellow voice with the manner of a privileged old family retainer.

He wore tightly-fitting, well-cut clothes and a twice-round ‘bird’s-eye’ scarf. ‘Come in, sir—come in,’ he exclaimed hospitably as I entered and was introduced. ‘Hadn’t you a brother up at Jesus in ’71? I thought so. In the Hussars now, if I’m not mistaken? The 13th? Oh ah—yes. They’re out in India, of course. Now try a glass of that wine, sir, and tell me what you think of it—Duc de Mélasse. It’s not one of those advertisin’ brands; it don’t require advertisin’; it advertises itself. I was just tellin’ Mr. Mughouse ’e ought to ’ave a little bit on Penultimate next Wednesday at Lincoln. ’E’s only got 7 stone 8 to carry, and ’e knows the course as well as you and me knows the way to bed, and that’s ’alf the battle. No, no, Mr. Mughouse! don’t you go and ’ave it on with your friend Mr. Razzell; he’ll only lay you fours. I’ll tell you what I’ll do: I’ll put you on myself at twenty-five pounds to five, and if ’e wins you shall throw me over a five-pound note. I’m glad to see you’re enjoying that wine, sir,’ he went on as I politely gulped down the sparkling syrup.

‘It’s not a *brut* wine,’ he admitted. ‘I wouldn’t ’ave a *brut* wine on my table—nasty doctored-up stuff! That’s a wine you can taste the grape and the sunshine in. I’ll see if I’ve got a case of it left, and I’ll send it round to your rooms, sir.’

'Thank you very much,' I protested, not quite sure whether he meant it as a present or how. 'But I don't want any more champagne in my—er—cellar just now.' ('My cellar' was a lift-up window-seat.)

'Ah! But when you *do* want it I may not 'ave it,' said Mr. Mason sagely. 'Besides, it's like puttin' money in the bank. I send you six dozen of this wine (if I've got it—mind you, I can't promise). You've only got to pay for the *wine*, not for a high-falutin' name and a lot of advertisin'. I'll charge you just five per cent. more than I paid the shippers. You shall have that wine at 93s. 6d. a dozen, and if you like to bring it back to me in three or four years' time, and say, "Mason, what 'll you give me for this Duc de Mélasse?" I'll pay you a pound a bottle for it. You're not enjoyin' that cigar, sir,' he suddenly exclaimed, changing the subject. 'Throw it away. No, no; I insist; there's not flavour enough in that cigar to suit you.'

As a matter of fact, the foul weed was full of an overwhelming flavour, more like creosote than anything else I could think of. But I was glad to be rid of it.

'No,' said my host; 'I keep those light-coloured ones for youngsters who ain't used to tobacco. Now, there's a cigar you'll appreciate, sir—a Flor de Caracol; and, to my acute distress, he forced an

evil-looking, dark-green, sausage-shaped object into my hand. ‘You’ll *enjoy* that cigar, sir,’ he went on. ‘And if I let you ’ave five ’undred of ’em, you mustn’t ask me ’ow I came by them. But I tell you this much’—and he lowered his voice to a whisper—‘*they’ve never paid duty.*’

And this was very likely true. As they were certainly not made of tobacco, there was no reason why they should have. He went on talking racing to Mughouse and Spooner and one or two others until I presently attracted his attention again by inadvertently stroking the head of a terrier of sorts.

‘Hullo, sir,’ exclaimed my host, ‘I didn’t know you were a dawg-fancier. But now I call it to mind, so was your brother before you. Would you believe it, sir, young Sir Plumley Duff was in here the other day, and ’e couldn’t see the beauty of that dawg? He’s not one of your long-nosed terriers like they’re trying to pass ’em off now; he’s one of the little pug-nosed ones such as they *used* to breed. Little beauty!’ and he patted the mongrel affectionately. ‘It’s very seldom you find ’em nowadays with the one wall eye. There’s his sister there—Come ’ere, Vic!—I wouldn’t part with ’er not if you was to offer me a fifty-pound note, I wouldn’t. But as for Nip—well, sir, as you’ve taken a fancy to the little dawg, I’ll make you a present of ’im; I’m sure you’ll be kind to ’im. Don’t give ’im

any meat—a little green vegetables with 'is biscuit now and then. But there, I dare say you know as much about keepin' dawgs as what I do.'

'But I can't think of accepting your dog,' I exclaimed, horrified at the prospect. 'It's extremely kind of you, but—'

'Very well, then,' said Mr. Dick Mason. 'So as there shan't be any obligation, you shall give me a five-pound note for 'im. Only that's between ourselves. If anyone asks you, say, "I was made a present of 'im;" and at that price, sir, you won't be tellin' a word of a lie.'

The following day I received a six-dozen case of Duc de Mélasse (Private Cuvée), five boxes of the mysterious Flor de Caracol weeds, and a message asking where was the dog to go. My bill would have amounted to £53 14s. Luckily, I had the strength of mind to repudiate the contract and to refuse to take in the things. But I was so young that I felt like a swindler for doing so, and for a long time I turned a guilty crimson whenever I heard the name of plausible old Dick Mason.

My principal amusements at Cambridge were boxing and fencing. Galpin, from Angelo's, opened a *salle d'armes* in the town. Egerton Castle was his show-pupil with the foils, if pupil he could be called, for even in these days he was a first-rate fencer. Cricket I could not abide, for when I was

about nine years old I was badly cut over in a school match, and since that date I have funk'd a cricket-ball more utterly than any other missile, crisis or calamity I ever heard of. I had rather stroll between rifle-butts and soldiers when they are at practice than enter Battersea Park on a Saturday afternoon in summer when children are playing cricket there. On the two or three occasions that I have had to witness cricket-matches from the alleged security of a pavilion, I have always felt as nervous as the historical sufferer from gout who used to sit in his wheel-chair on the cliffs at Ramsgate and wave his stick and shriek with apprehension if he saw a vessel go past his foot so near as the horizon.

When I was at Cambridge there was an annual match between two social clubs—the A.D.C. and the Athenæum—which was more a parade of the prominent members of each club than a display of cricket, and in which no well-known member could well refuse to play, if asked. I was once called upon to play for the A.D.C. After a good deal of pressing I consented, on condition that I didn't have to field. I lay awake in terror most of the previous night, and when the fateful moment arrived for me to go in, I felt faint and sick at heart. I was rigged out in pads and gloves with india-rubber tyres to the fingers, and crept like snail unwillingly to the wicket. It so happened that

most of the members of the eleven were members of the Athenæum ; I think Alfred Lyttelton was the only Blue on our side. I had to face the bowling of Ivo Bligh. Trembling in every limb, I endeavoured to assume a defiant attitude, though I stood as edgewise as I could. ‘Nelly’ contemplated me for some time, gently tossing the ‘leather’ (as I believe it is called by sporting reporters) from hand to hand. Then he stooped low and discharged it in my direction. It travelled along the ground very slowly ; I thought it would never reach me. Still, it was a cricket-ball, and it was aimed at me, and I felt duly conscious of my peril. The fag end of an advertisement concerning nervous debility came into my mind, I remember : ‘And the patient’ (who has *not* taken So-and-So’s Syrup) ‘turns his face to the wall and prays for death, which speedily ensues.’ Nearer, nearer came the ball. At last I felt the moment for action had arrived. I made a mighty blow at it, but as my ‘willow’ neared the turf the ball gave a pirouette like a graceful dancer, evaded my bat, and presently just tapped the middle stump. After a second or so of strong, nervous tension I saw the bails fall to the ground, and I knew I was a free man. I never enjoyed a meal more than the luncheon that followed this terrible experience.

Next day I walked up to Fenner’s and found the scoring-book unguarded. I felt the o looked some-

what insignificant, so I inserted some ones and twos and made my score up to ten, making a corresponding alteration in the total of the innings. Anyone who has Lillywhite's Guide (or Calendar, or whatever it is called) for 1878 (I think that was the year) will see that I 'played in one match, made 10 runs—annual average 10.'

CHAPTER IV

Holidays—In the Ardennes—A wild-boar battue—Hints on foreign venery—The fox, and how to slay him—The boar, and how to elude him—Norway—Camping on the Dover-fjeld—Freya—His lordship's valet—My very obedient servant—The power of imagination—Charley Buller—An incident at Lord's—March strawberries—Lionel Tennyson and the smuggler.

ONE of the pleasantest holidays I ever spent was during one long vocation, when poor Arnald de Grey and Bernard Holland (I wonder if he remembers the sect of the 'Misosophers' which Herbert Stephen and he and I started at Cambridge, and whether he is still true to its tenets?) went on what we were pleased to call a 'reading tour.' We first crossed from Harwich to Antwerp, where we dawdled through a few delightful days. We then made Rotterdam our headquarters, and went lazy expeditions on steamers through the canals, doing as the Dutch did—smoking in silence, and eating numberless meals of tea, with piles of bread-and-butter and bread and cheese.

At last we got to Diekirch, a delightful spot in

the Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg. The hotel was called the Hotel des Ardennes, and was kept by an Anglomaniac named Heck. He entertained us royally, for five francs a day, which included coffee and rolls in our rooms, a solid mid-day meal, and a Lord Mayor's banquet at half-past six. There was a pleasant wine of the country, bottled in hock bottles, rather like a Steinwein in flavour, at about tenpence a bottle. After dinner we used to sit on a terrace overlooking the Moselle, smoke our pipes and watch the sunset, while our host, who was a violinist, and his daughter, who was a charming pianist, and his brother, who performed upon the 'cello, played Beethoven trios in the neighbouring dining-room.

In the morning we used to bathe in the Moselle before breakfast, and amuse ourselves by swimming across into Prussia, which was about 10 yards off. After which our host would organize fishing expeditions for us (he was able to procure us some excellent trout fishing). Sometimes he would come with us, but almost always we were accompanied by a charming old Major Coppering, who, with his wife, were the only other Britons in the place. He was a Chamberlain to His Holiness, and showed us with pride his own photograph in tights and a short mantle. He was an enthusiastic fisherman, and taught me not only how to throw a fly, but how to

tie one, and I once experienced the heavenly sensation of catching a two-pound trout with a fly of my own manufacture.

I remember on one occasion, after a long day's fishing, all of us wet through and ravenously hungry, we missed the last train back to Diekirch. We had to walk sixteen miles along the railway-line. We obtained from the station-master a piece of candle to light us through the tunnels. We had a dreary trudge of five hours on loose slag, and once or twice we had to dodge an approaching train. We cheered ourselves up by singing all the songs we knew. Luckily old Major Coppering had a large selection. I discovered early on our tramp I had a flask nearly full of whisky, but I didn't divulge the fact until we left the railway-line and were within three miles of home, when we all lay down on the dusty highroad round our stump of candle, which we stuck up in the middle, and gratefully drank to our home-coming.

There was a hospitable old Baron in the neighbourhood of Diekirch who, hearing that there were Englishmen at the hotel, gave a wild-boar battue in our honour, and invited us to meet him and other sportsmen at a neighbouring railway-station. We accepted with alacrity. We were able, through our friendly landlord, to borrow some pin-fire guns, made in Liége, if I recollect rightly. We were

instructed to load with big shot in the first barrel and ball in the second. According to the laws of the country, we were not permitted to carry our guns in the ordinary way, but were compelled to wear them strapped across us. Our fellow-sportsmen, to the number of about a dozen, met us on the platform, and commenced proceedings by singing national airs and such inspiriting ditties as '*Mourir pour la patrie ! C'est le sort le beau qu'il y ait sur la te-e-e-rre.*' They were mostly farmers, and marvellously got up.

One of the most picturesque was a fat old chap, with a gray toothbrush moustache, which did not reach the corners of his mouth. He wore a Panama hat, a velveteen coat, and gaiters halfway up the hip, attached by means of buckles. Across his left shoulder was the strap of his gun ; on his right he wore a roomy game-bag, from the net of which peeped a cold chicken, a roll, some salad, and a bottle of claret. Attached to his belt was a sheathed *couteau de chasse* about 2 feet long. He asked me if '*monsieur* had ever before made *la chasse au sanglier ?*' I told him this was my first experience. He then enlightened me as to the habits of the wild-boar, and the manner in which to tackle him.

'If you wound a boar,' he told me, 'he will turn round and charge in your direction, but not actually

at you. He will appear to be about to rush past you, but as he approaches *gare à vous*. Il est bien malin le sanglier! Ah oui! He will pretend not to see you, but as he reaches you he will suddenly turn his head and break your shins with his tusk. Then he will apply himself to disembowelling you. It will be all very fine for monsieur to endeavour to lie on his face. Master Boar will turn you over with his snout.'

'What must be done, then,' I inquired, 'to avoid this fate?'

'That is what I am going to tell you,' replied my old sporting authority. 'It is a manœuvre requiring much nerve and much composure. Monsieur must hold his ground, his hunting-knife in his hand. As the boar throws himself upon him, monsieur must take one step to the rear, and plunge his blade into the breast just behind the shoulder—thus!' And he drew his small sword and made an impressive lunge in the direction of the newspaper and tobacco stall, to the great admiration of the old lady presiding thereat.

When we reached our destination we were met by the Baron, who welcomed us cordially, and by his nephew, a young Vicomte. They were dressed less picturesquely than their farmer guests, yet not quite after the English fashion. They wore stiff felt hats, black melton coats, huge *nœuds flottants* of

a bird's-eye pattern, and trousers tucked into leather spats. There was also the *piqueur*, the huntsman or head-keeper. He was a very fine fellow, very keen, dressed in an ordinary peasant's blouse, with a curved horn, like a child's toy, hung about his neck. He had with him a nondescript pack of six or eight hounds, and before we started he very practically told us the value of each, in case, 'par malheur, un de ces messieurs' should chance, in a fit of misdirected zeal, to slay a dog instead of a pig—'voilà Léon, par exemple'; and he indicated a huge white, woolly dog, exactly like a toy sheep in the Lowther Arcade. 'Il est très bon pour attaquer, celui-là—Léon vaut cent francs.' The only couple that looked at all workmanlike were two English otter-hounds. However, we were told the price of each, in case of accidents, and then proceeded to the covert. I was placed in a corner, well hidden, near a little bridle-path that ran through the forest. Presently the huntsman sounded a note upon his horn which announced to us that beaters and dogs had started.

It was a lovely day and a beautiful spot. All of a sudden I beheld a tiny fox's cub whose ears, far sharper than mine, had heard, no doubt, the distant tread of the beater. He strutted past me in the sunshine, within a couple of yards, sniffing the air, preening his whiskers, beaming with life and joy

and juvenile slyness. A few seconds later I heard a sharp pung ! pung ! and the poor little varmint hove again into sight, crawling along the ground with his hind-quarters shattered. The Vicomte was in close pursuit, hunting-knife in hand, and presently he flung himself on the top of his quarry. He stabbed the tiny beast through and through, rolled on the path with it, so that he himself became caked in blood and dust. Then, drawing himself erect, he held up the mangled mite by its brush, and exclaimed in triumph : ‘ Ah ! il est bien mort, celui-là ! ’ It gave me a feeling of physical nausea.

Soon after that we heard piercing screams, such as one might expect to hear from a man upon the rack. All that I had recently heard of the wild-boar’s penchant for the inwards of his pursuer rushed into my mind, and I hurried, pale of cheek, in the direction of these signals of distress. I was soon joined by my two friends, equally anxious to render succour, if in time. We presently came upon the emitter of the yells. It was my plump old friend, the sporting authority, who, oblivious of his own maxims, was hanging on to a hazel-tree which bowed under his weight. His *couteau de chasse* had fallen from its scabbard, and lay on the ground by the side of his undischarged gun. For a second I feared he was wounded, but I soon perceived that it was only his bottle of *petit-bleu*,

which had got damaged in his ascent and was pouring forth its life on to the turf. And last of all we caught sight of the furious cause of this stampede. It was a diminutive marcassin, or wild sucking-pig, who looked not much larger than a frog, and was snorting anathema through his little upturned snout. He scampered away when he saw he was outnumbered, and our portly Belgian shikaree alighted from his coign of vantage, burst into tears of gratitude, and kissed each of us on either cheek for coming to his rescue.

At luncheon the vulpecidal Vicomte was the hero of the hour ; for although two or three small pigs had been killed, the dead baby-fox was regarded as the most glorious trophy. We discovered that, of the entire party, Bernard Holland had had the greatest opportunity of distinguishing himself in venery, but had failed to take advantage of it. He told us he had seen a huge boar with his wives and offspring gathered together in a glade within thirty or forty yards of where he was standing ; they held a hurried *conseil de famille*, and my friend became so engrossed in observing the demeanour and conduct of these rightful inhabitants of the forest that he entirely forgot he was there to slay them, and it was not until luncheon that it occurred to him that he ought to have exploded his piece. We rallied him a good deal, and to such good purpose that when

we were replaced in another covert his enthusiasm very nearly brought about a tragedy. We had told him that he must fire at any foreign object he might perceive moving in the underwood, and he went to his post, gun in hand, alert for slaughter. In a few minutes we heard two reports, in quick succession, from Bernard Holland's quarter. He had seen something move. 'Ah ça, Monsieur l'Anglais!' cried the Baron, leaping from behind a bush, and holding up his hat, which had been perforated by my friend's unerring bullet. 'Qu'est-ce que ça signifie? Ce n'est pas comme ça qu'on fait la chasse, sacré nom d'une pipe!'

However, later on in the day Bernard Holland slew the biggest beast of the day, a great pig who turned the scale at 150 kilos.

Another long vacation I went with Arnald de Grey and Howard Whitbread to Norway in pursuit of reindeer. It was in 1877, I think the last year of free shooting in that country—nowadays I believe it is necessary to take out an expensive license; also, I fancy, there are difficulties about the importation of dogs. But in those days it was a perfectly simple and economical form of holiday. We took two Scotch setters with us for the ryper shooting, and all kinds of pots and pans and paraphernalia for camping out.

We started from Hull on board the old *Tasso*.

There was a legend that the original Wilson was especially attached to that particular boat, and left an annuity to his sons so long as she should be kept running, and that in her old age the company had accordingly put new ends to her instead of breaking her up, and that that was why she was too long for her beam, and displayed a hilarious disposition to roll. We reached Molde in the evening of the fourth day. The next day we took a steamer up the fjord to Ness, whence we proceeded to Aak, and from there we drove about thirty-five English miles in carioles to Molmern. There we were met by the Norwegian stalker, whom we had engaged by letter, Ole Svanemyr (the 'Ole' pronounced as his admirers pronounce the name of the financier who presented a set of Communion-plate to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's), and a gillie, who took our heavy luggage on by pony to Aurshö to the *saeter* we proposed to make our headquarters. They came back for us in a couple of days and conducted us to our destination. We had to walk about twenty miles across absolutely bare gray rocks without a sign of vegetation; we might have been in the moon. At last we saw a patch of green in the distance, and presently a slate-coloured loch, and at last a little cluster of four or five huts. These are inhabited during the summer by cowherds and their families; but they appear to be

common property, and room is made, as a matter of course, for new arrivals. We took possession of the hut allotted to us. I made a fire, and we supped off tinned soup, corned beef, ship's biscuit, and whisky. Every morning the cowherds with their pipes, and their wives and sisters with their knitting, used to stroll to the edge of the loch and, with grave surprise, gaze at us as we bathed.

We were too high up for salmon, but there were plenty of trout; the biggest we ever killed was about 3 pounds. But we found to our dismay that these barbarous fish had not been educated up to London-made flies—to Jermyn Street Duns and Palmers and Coch-y-Bondhus; they did not appear to be able even to see these delicate works of art, or, if they did, they had not been taught that they were intended to be the images of anything appetizing in Nature. But, fortunately, Arnald de Grey had brought with him an old book of gaudy salmon-flies, out of which we were able to fashion some flashy little baits which may not have absolutely deceived the Scandinavian trout, but at all events frequently excited his curiosity to fatal lengths. We were always able to breakfast off freshly-killed trout in addition to our porridge. Also we soon got a larder full of game—ryper, wild-duck, and venison. I was cook to the party, and after awhile the others grumbled if I did not give them 'courses.' I think

the most elaborate dinner I ever served them consisted of broth, grilled trout (done with a dash of onion and some coarse oatmeal), hashed venison, roast ryper, and girdle-cakes of rye-meal—all at a wood-fire on a slab of stone under a hole in the roof. I once cooked them a red-throated diver (I got a pair with their red throats on). I skinned him and buried him for twenty-four hours, and stuffed him with onion stuffing, but he was rather fishy for all that. We were glad when we had finished him.

Ole Svanemyr had a delightful dog called Freya, something like an Esquimaux dog. She was a kind of blue-gray with long, pointed, mobile ears and a tightly-curled, bushy tail. She was a very clever tracker, and I believe she was also broken to sheep. Once, when Whitbread and I were returning from a long day's stalking—it was past midnight, and we had left Aurshö at 6 a.m.—Freya was in front of us, and her master 50 yards or so behind carrying a couple of haunches (when we killed a beast we had to cut him up there and then, carry home a portion, and build a cairn over the remainder, which we would send the gillie and pony for next morning). Presently we were crossing a bit of glacier, and we wanted to consult the stalker as to the direction we should take, but the little man was nowhere to be seen. We turned back, and presently came to

where the haunches lay upon the snow, but there was no sign of Ole. We shouted, but received no answer. All of a sudden we made the startling observation that, although his footsteps were plainly visible in the snow up the hillside to where we stood, where he had deposited the haunches, there was no track leading away from that spot. With British lack of imagination, we were utterly unable to draw any 'deduction,' as Baden-Powell would say, until Freya, far more intelligent than either of us, began to scratch furiously at the drift, and the truth dawned upon us that our guide had slipped into a crevasse, and the fine snow had fallen in and filled up the fissure. We managed to get him out and to restore him, and he strode along the remainder of the way as though nothing had happened.

After a month I had to leave my friends encamped on the Doverfjeld, and hurry back to Molde to catch the homeward-bound *Tasso*.

I had a beard of six weeks' growth, my knicker-bockers were stained with traces of butchery and of cooking, and I carried with me a huge haunch of reindeer venison, a rifle-case, and a leather bag. I had got to the last stage of my journey—that is to say, after about thirty hours' cariole drive I was on board the little fjord steamer bound for Molde. A tall, well-set-up man with small side-whiskers, clad in a well-cut 'pepper-and-salt' suit surmounted

by a square hard felt hat, strolled leisurely up and accosted me. He was obviously the great servant of a great man. He paid me the compliment of taking me to be a humble member of his own calling. ‘Mornin’,’ he commenced affably. ‘Fine mornin’. Is your governor on board?’ ‘No, he isn’t,’ I was able to reply truthfully. ‘I see you’ve got a haunch of venison there. I suppose you’ve rubbed it over with salt and pepper?’ he proceeded kindly. ‘I’ll show you where to hang it up when we get on board the English boat. Midships you want to hang it, where it’ll get the draught.’ I gave him some Scotch whisky I had in my flask, and he gave me a fill of tobacco. ‘What sort of a governor have you got?’ he presently asked me. ‘He’s a very good old chap indeed,’ I answered. ‘Mine’s a rum un,’ said he—‘Earl Wallsend. You’ve heard of him, I dare say?’ I nodded. ‘He’s all right at times,’ proceeded the valet; ‘but when he’s out of sorts he’s a tartar. He’s eccentric, you know. Just a *leetle* bit upstairs, he is. Always worritin’ about his health.’ And he went on to tell me a number of stories about his lordship, with whom, it so happened, I was acquainted. Then Mr. Berryman (that I found was my new friend’s name) went on to give me a description of the household. The *chef* was dishonest and drunken, the butler was ‘a terrible

hot-tempered man,' and so on, and after about half an hour, our acquaintance having ripened into intimacy, he confided to me some of his conquests. How her ladyship's maid had become infatuated with him, but that, unfortunately, she had red hair, which he, personally, could not abide. His favourite, it appeared, was one of the stillroom-maids ; but Mrs. Marsham, the housekeeper, had the eye of a hawk, and consequently the course of their true love ran by no means smooth. 'Spiteful old vixen, Mrs. Marsham ! Very gone on the *chef*, she is.' And so he prattled on until we arrived at the Molde landing-stage, where old Lord Wallsend was standing. 'Well, so long,' said my friend, shaking me by the hand. 'We shall meet again on board the old *Tasso*.' 'My dear friend, *how* do you do ?' exclaimed Lord Wallsend, as soon as he caught sight of me. 'Come up to the hotel and have some breakfast. The boat's not in yet, and I've sent my courier on to tell them to wait.' Poor Berryman turned as white as a sheet, and looked as though he would fain sink into the hold. However, I kept his confidences inviolate. Lord Wallsend told him off to wait on me during the voyage home. He was an admirable valet.

I remember one day, on that voyage back to England, the skipper, who usually presided at our table, was on deck for some reason, and I was invited

to carve. The old steward leant over my shoulder with a plate, and asked for a second helping of mutton, then added in an earnest whisper, which seemed to contain a hint as to ‘pope’s-eyes,’ ‘*For the Earl!*’

One of the best servants I ever had was a man called Viner. He was an ex-hussar, and extraordinarily ‘handy’ and resourceful. On one occasion I was travelling up to Inverness with a kind host and hostess, who had a forest in the Glenmoriston district. Their saloon carriage contained every conceivable luxury—hampers of wine and provisions, a library of books and magazines, even a wheel of *petits chevaux* to beguile the journey. It was a baking hot afternoon in August, and presently, as the Highland train dawdled from one sleepy little station to another, it occurred to us that some cup would be refreshing. But although we had wine, soda-water, liqueurs, lemons, sugar, ice, one essential was lacking—we had no vessel to make it in. We were just moving slowly out of Kingussie; I looked out of window, and caught the alert eye of Viner, who at every station poked an inquiring head out of his third-class carriage window. ‘Just get a jug, will you, at the next station we stop at?’ I exclaimed. ‘Very good, sir,’ I saw his lips reply, as he touched his hat. I gave the order more to amuse my companions than with any idea that my faithful retainer would under-

take such an apparently forlorn hope as the purchase of a wassail-bowl at a Scotch railway-station. I don't think a civilian servant would have taken my order seriously, or else he would have presently come up and said, 'Beg pardon, sir, but where am I to get that jug? What sort of jug do you want, sir? How much am I to give for it, sir?' and so forth. But soldier servants are different. 'Theirs not to make reply, theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do'—what their masters tell them, and be sworn at if the result is unsatisfactory. At the next stopping-place—Kincraig I think it was—I saw Viner jump out of his carriage while the train was going at full speed—that is to say, at about ten miles an hour—and tear out of the station. We only waited three minutes or so, and then the locomotive gave a few drowsy snorts and reluctantly started off again. 'What an idiot that man is!' I muttered. 'He might have known—' But at that moment he reappeared, an enormous white bedroom jug in his hand, and, after pressing his hat on to his head, took a harlequin leap through our window, then picked himself up, apologized for the unceremonious method of his entry, and retired to the corridor. I asked him afterwards how he had contrived to get the jug. 'Well, sir,' he replied, 'I knew I hadn't overmuch time. I saw a cottage close by the station: I bolted in—there was an old lady in the settin'

room, but I ran past her into her bedroom, collared the ewer that was standin' in the basin, chucked her a couple of bob, and got back just in time, sir. I hope her ladyship didn't think it a liberty, sir, my comin' in like that through the window ; but I took it you was in a hurry for the jug, sir.'

I spent some delightful Christmas holidays with Edward Bouverie in Wiltshire. They are especially impressed upon my memory by a striking instance of the power of the imagination. I travelled with my host and two or three others one December evening to Market Lavington. It was bitterly cold, and we were in an unupholstered third-class carriage. By the time we got to the end of our railway journey it was pitch dark and we were frozen. A private omnibus had been sent to meet us, and we trooped into it and pulled up the glass of the window. 'I do hope to goodness they've remembered to put in the foot-warmers!' exclaimed our host, reconnoitring with his foot. 'Thank goodness ! it's all right ;' and sure enough we found stowed under the seats two heavy contrivances which we hauled into line and gratefully rested our feet upon. The effect was instantaneous. Immediately a delicious warmth permeated the soles of our boots, thawed our icy feet, mulled our frozen shins, and soon turned all the winter of our bodies into glorious summer.

'What asses we were not to have had foot-warmers in the train!' we reflected. 'Yes, but, hang it! this is almost *too* much of a good thing!' exclaimed one perspiring traveller. 'Do you fellows mind if we have a bit of window down?' The glass was accordingly lowered, and we breathed more freely. Thoroughly warm in our bodies, we felt refreshed by the keen night air blowing in on to our faces.

'I'm extremely sorry, sir,' murmured the butler to Edward Bouverie as our light luggage was being brought into the hall at the manor-house. 'Denis was out driving the ladies, and I could only send young Vincent with the omnibus, and he must needs drive off without the foot-warmers!' It then turned out that the objects on which we had been so cosily resting our feet were two of our own gun-cases.

The name of Edward Bouverie reminds me, among many delightful memories, of rackets and tennis. The only inter-University contest which had any attraction for me was the rackets. It used to take place in the court of the old 'Princes' Club in Pont Street. It was there that I first saw Charley Buller, about twenty-six years ago (I wonder what has happened to him now?). He was in the gallery, clad in a loose white dressing-gown, leaning over the balustrade, acting as judge. He

was a typical Ouida hero—a mixture of athletic and effeminate beauty—and he occasionally justified that extraordinarily clever writer by behaving exactly as one of her own special and particular guardsmen, and no one else, would have behaved in similar circumstances.

Once, at Lord's, Charley Buller had in some official capacity to give a decision prejudicial to a certain professional cricketer, whom we will call Bates. Bates accepted his reprimand, then slunk off to a bar and brooded, to the accompaniment of several glasses of brandy-and-water. He presently came to the conclusion that he had a grievance against Buller which demanded immediate redress. Accordingly, he searched Lord's cricket-ground for his enemy. There was a fashionable match in progress, and presently he found the fascinating Captain faultlessly dressed in masterpieces by Poole and Lock, leaning over an emblazoned barouche, talking to a dazzling Duchess, just as though he had been placed there by the magic hand of Ouida herself.

The sulky cricketer eyed him for a moment with a heaving breast, then took a short run, and kicked him in the most obvious and insulting manner as hard as he knew how.

Charley Buller, with the most perfect self-restraint, merely glanced over his shoulder to see who his

assailant was, concluded his conversation, bowed smilingly to his fair companion, and then made his way to the pavilion.

‘Send Bates to me, will you?’ he said to an attendant, and he picked up a cricket-stump as he spoke. And when Bates arrived, he took him by the collar and thrashed him with that stump until he could thrash no longer, and the unfortunate professional was sent off with three broken ribs to the hospital, where he remained an inmate for five weeks.

An obdurate fair one once refused ever to see Charley Buller again unless he should bring her a basket of strawberries. As it was the month of March, her swain was plunged in the depths of despair. But by the aid of the sapient Mr. Solomon, of Piccadilly, he was able in about a week to present himself at the hard-hearted lady’s bower, laden with a chip basket containing about twelve pale, seed-speckled berries which had cost about a sovereign each, nestling in a bed of ducal foliage, and screened from the March winds by layers of wool and blue paper.

‘Is madame at home?’ inquired the proud gallant.

‘I’ll inquire, sir,’ said the servant.

‘Do, and say Captain Buller has brought the strawberries,’ said the visitor, as he was shown into a boudoir to wait.

'How surprised she'll be!' reflected our friend, as he stripped the precious basket of its coverings. 'They don't look particularly inviting, but they *are* strawberries. There's no getting away from that. She *must* be pleased at the trouble I've taken to get them, as she was so bent on them, whether they're fit to eat or not. I don't suppose they've really any flavour at all. I think I'll just taste one and see. . . . Practically without any taste at all! But that was a very white one. . . . *That* one was better! They're rather sweet and refreshing, but they've no distinctive flavour.'

As his lovely hostess sailed into the room, the absent-minded Charles was in the act of throwing out of the window the stalk of the last strawberry.

I was at Cambridge with both Hallam and Lionel Tennyson. The latter was one or two years senior to me, the other, of course, more than that. I succeeded to Hallam's rooms—on the left hand of the entrance-gate to the old court, over the office. They had been Alfred's in the 'dawn-golden times'; my father's had been on the same staircase on the floor above, and were then part of my tutor's suite. Lionel was by far the more companionable of the two brothers. Hallam seemed to me to wear the name of Tennyson as a kind of levée-dress; Lionel wore it more as a becoming easy jacket. A story

recurs to me which Lionel told me of an adventure he once had in the Isle of Wight.

He was strolling along Freshwater beach one blustering day, when a seafaring man lurched up to him and asked him for a light. The stranger was a picturesque figure. His face was bronzed, his piercing gray eyes peered from under a pair of shaggy eyebrows, his hair was long and curly, he had rings in his ears and a fur cap on his head. His stained canvas overalls were bound round his waist by a coloured sash and tucked into sea-boots, and he wore a weather-beaten pilot-jacket. ‘Axin’ yer pardon, sir,’ he said in a hoarse whisper, ‘but might you be a gen’leman wot enj’ys ’is bit o’ ‘backer?’ Taken aback by the suddenness of the question, Lionel stammered forth the admission that he was a smoker. ‘And perhaps you’d like it none the worse,’ the man of the sea proceeded, more huskily than ever, and with a cautious glance over his shoulder, ‘if so be as it ’adn’t paid no dooty! Leastways, if I’m wrong I ’ope as ’ow you won’t say nothin’ to get a pore man into trouble.’ Lionel swore himself to secrecy, and his new friend confided to him that he was the mate of a lugger which was lying-to about a mile out; that he and his lawless mates had voyaged across the Atlantic with a cargo of priceless Havana cigars, which they had been unable to land at Plymouth, their original

destination, owing to the vigilance of the revenue officers ; that even there, in the Isle of Wight, the authorities were on the alert. The beach was 'regular infested' with coast-guards (he used a vulgar but graphic adjective in place of the past participle), and what they proposed to do was to find a few discreet customers in different ports, and get rid of their stuff in small parcels. 'They segars,' said the smuggler, 'is worth a shillin' apiece of anyone's money. Yet, pushed as we are, we're willin' to part with 'em at a sovereign a hundred.'

'I don't mind buying a couple of hundred,' said Lionel. 'Where can I—call for them?'

'Don't you miss this chance, guv'ner,' urged the sailor. 'It's the chance of a lifetime. 'Ave twenty boxes. You can walk into any terbaccernist's shop to-morrow and make £80 profit on yer bargain. And the longer yer keeps 'em, the more they'll matoor.'

At last young Tennyson was prevailed upon to invest in twelve boxes for £10. 'Wot you've got to do, sir,' said the man whose accomplice in crime he had become, 'is to charter a small boat. There's the *Mary Anne*, Tom Purvis. 'E's a man o' the world, a man you can trust, is Tom Purvis. You'll leave 'is 'ard about nine o'clock. Tell 'im to make a course for the Brambles Lightship and keep a look-out for the *Harry Paulet*, of

Falmouth. Then, if you sees a *white* light hangin' over her port bow, come alongside and sing out : "Say, matey, wot's it like outside ?" Then for the countersign you'll 'ear : "Some dirty weather blowin' up from the west." Then you'll know as all's serene, you'll 'and up the money, in *gold*, mind yer, and we'll sling over the 'backer.'

Tom Purvis required a good deal of talking over. He said he 'didn't half like the job. It went against his conscience.' But he consented at last to undertake it for a sovereign. It was a very unpleasant night, and about midway, when it seemed too late to turn back, poor Lionel was overtaken by terrible sea-sickness, and when the *Mary Anne* came under the lee of the *Harry Paulet* it was a feeble voice indeed that arose from the bottom of the wherry and inquired, with no ring of interest, 'what it was like outside.' And when the reply came, 'Some dirty weather blowin' up from the west,' the amateur smuggler could only retort with a moan. However, he contrived to hand over the ten sovereigns he had brought with him. The twelve cedarwood boxes were lowered out, and the *Mary Anne* was soon running before the wind back into Freshwater Bay, while the *Harry Paulet* forged still further into her iniquitous course towards Hamble.

When Lionel came to examine his bargain in the

privacy of his bedroom at Farringford, he found himself the possessor of 1,200 cigars manufactured near Wellclose Square, in the East End of London, out of goodness knows what, and worth about 1s. 8d. a hundred wholesale. As for Tom Purvis, he denied all knowledge of the *Harry Paulet*, nor had he any suggestion to make as to who could be the illicit trader from Havana who esteemed him so highly as a 'man o' the world.' But he blossomed forth into a new suit of clothes the following Sunday.

CHAPTER V

'Adopting the stage as a profession'—Expert advice—The calling then and now—'Touring'—Discomforts—Typhoid fever—Sir William Jenner—A pantomime engagement—A 'stage-name'—The Haymarket Theatre—The Bancrofts at rehearsal—Frank Marshall—As a maker of salad.

It was early in 1879 that I made up my mind to go upon the stage—if I could. I don't think it was Vanity that prompted me—at least, not Vanity alone—although she may have thrown out to me an occasional word of encouragement. I was 'eating my dinners' at the Inner Temple with Herbert Stephen, Rudolph Lehmann, Edward Bouverie, Samuel Whitbread, and others; but I felt I ought to try and earn an income sooner than I had any prospect of doing at the Bar. I sought advice in all kinds of quarters. Mrs. Alfred Wigan counselled me to join a stock company so as to get plenty of hard work and experience, the only objection to this excellent scheme being that there were no stock companies to join. Mr. Hamilton Aïde recommended me, vaguely, to 'study in

Paris.' Arthur Cecil urged me strongly to do nothing of the kind.

My most practical adviser was my old friend Henry Kemble, who bade me to luncheon at the Garrick Club to meet Charles Kelly (Ellen Terry's husband). My host had never witnessed my amateur efforts, and was able, all the more conscientiously perhaps, to extol my latent histrionic ability, with the result that a few days afterwards I made my first stage appearance with Kelly and his company at a morning performance at the Alexandra Palace, for which I received a salary of ten shillings.

I think on the whole I was wise, situated as I was, to go on the stage. As I said before, I wanted to begin to earn my living at once. I had achieved no scholarly distinction at Cambridge, and the stage appeared to be the only craft which one was paid to learn. And the theatre of those days was an essentially different institution to the theatre of to-day. Most of the managers of those days were actors who had made their names, who had got over the first zeal for personal prominence. The money they invested in the business was generally money they had earned by acting. And while some were extraordinarily kind to their employés and solicitous for their comfort, and others less so, there was always a certain sympathy between

actor and manager which there can never be between actor and syndicate.

I remember, for instance, an occasion when I had to go out of the bill at the Haymarket Theatre owing to domestic bereavement. We were playing '*Ours*' at the time, and I was the Sergeant Jones. My understudy, who took my place, was overtaken by a kind of alcoholic aphasia, and could not remember the word 'twins' which recurs several times in the part. I believe he substituted the word 'kittens' with disastrous results. At all events, for the following night Forbes Robertson (who had played the part at the old Prince of Wales's) had to be engaged—at special terms, no doubt. Then on Saturday afternoon there was a performance of '*A Lesson*' and of '*She Stoops to Conquer*', in both of which I usually played. Pinero had to study and play my part in the first piece, and Jack Maclean had to be sent for to play old Hardcastle in the comedy. When I came back a week later, the Bancrofts not only paid me an ordinary week's salary for the six days I had been away, but in addition paid me the extra matinée money, as though I had been acting and they had been put to no trouble and expense in finding people to take my place. I doubt if any other management in London—except the D'Oyly Cartes—would have acted with the same extraordinary generosity, and I am

certain that none of the present-day syndicate managements would have paid me a farthing for the time I was away.

It was an evil day for actors when the City 'gents' realized that theatres offer similar possibilities for gambling to those afforded by mines and stocks ; that theatrical venture presents all kinds of opportunities for miniature variations of the bigger game ; that when the gamester dares no longer show his nose in Broad Street, he is welcomed and hailed with deference and delight by the ingenuous young actor who wants to play Othello and by the infatuated young peer who wants to find a candle-stick in which to place the candle at which he is singeing his whiskers. The outlawed financier finds in theatrical speculation what the weather-bound lawn-tennis-player finds in 'ping-pong.' *Ce n'est pas absolument la guerre, mais c'est magnifique tout de même!* The novice imagines that the smallness of the table will hamper the expert and balance the difference of experience, but the more knowing player never comes off second best. It is always 'vantage' to him and then game.

The syndicate manager cares no more for the feelings or comfort of the actors in his employ than for those of the miners who are engaged in a Missing Diamond Competition in one of his mines.

He knows no more about art than the pavement bookmaker knows about a racehorse.

Again, should things go wrong, and the actor, who was engaged for two years certain at £50 a week for the first year and £60 a week for the second, full salaries for matinées, etc., fail to draw even a five-pound note, he will find the syndicate has evaporated. Even if he succeed in finding Mr. Schtidzintheim who engaged him, the latter will say, ‘My dear boy, *I’m* not responsible. *I* only represented the “High Comedy Production Syndicate.” *That* was amalgamated with the “New Century Revival Syndicate.” I’m sorry for the way you’ve been treated, but the man you want to get hold of is that scoundrel Schwindelbacher.’

But at the time that I went on the stage dangers of this kind had not come into being. The bogus manager existed only in the country. He would at intervals rear his head above the surface for a few hours, generally at the Gaiety bar, where he would engage his company and then plunge back into the depths of the provinces, followed by a confiding shoal, whom he would presently strand at Barrow-in-Furness or Stoke-on-Trent. Then he would return to a London tavern, engage another company of starving, sanguine players, and be on tour again before the last lot had had time to travel home ‘on their luggage,’ as the phrase went, and warn their

fellows. Not that warnings were of much use, however, for the bogus managers were generally notorious men ; but the actor out of work was often in so desperate a plight that he would knowingly engage with a rogue, and hope that a chance success might turn him honest. But the London actor was practically certain of his salary, and the pale-faced manager tearing Citywards in a hansom-cab on a Friday morning to try and raise enough for the night's 'treasury' was in those days an unfamiliar sight.

I started on tour in the autumn of 1879 with Charles Kelly and Ellen Terry. They were invariably charming and kind to me, and so was my faithful old friend Kemble, who came with us ; but the rest of the troupe were less sympathetic. My disillusionments began early. The bulk of the company had to travel third-class. Our 'leading man' wore a frock-coat and a battered straw-hat, and travelled in carpet slippers ; another of my new friends donned a green embroidered smoking-cap with a yellow tassel, another a purple knitted Tam-o'-Shanter. As soon as the train started they spread an imitation leopard-skin rug over their knees and commenced playing penny 'nap'—and quarrelling over it. At stations where we stopped for more time than was necessary for a run to the bar and back they became appallingly playful ; they would

hurl old jests at the porters, and pelt passing passengers with a shower of stale pleasantries from last year's Nuneaton pantomime. And I have never seen any theatrical company cross the border into Scotland without one of the comedians performing an imitation Scotch reel on the platform, generally with a railway-rug twisted round him, and exclaiming, 'Hoo's a' wi' ye?' to the nearest station official.

Amongst themselves, the conversation of my fellow-comedians was far from modest, and was mostly about their triumphs, histrionic and romantic. It was often interspersed with that strange jargon which certain newspapers attribute to all actors, but which I have only heard in the lowest theatrical circles. '*Omee of the casa*' meant 'the manager of the theatre' (*uomo della casa*); '*multee cattiva*,' 'very bad' (*molto cattivo*); '*nantee denaree*,' 'no money' (*niente dinaro*). Lodgings were called 'digs'; salary was 'screw.' 'What time are salaries paid?' 'When does the ghost walk?' And, for some inscrutable reason, all these strange tatterdemalions, between whom there was no atom of love lost, invariably addressed each other by the affectionate term of 'laddie.'

I remember one day, at a rehearsal of the 'Merchant of Venice,' the Bassanio advanced at the end of his Casket scene with outstretched arms,

prepared, according to the stage directions, to embrace the Lady of Belmont. Poor Miss Terry started back with a look of terror; then, recovering herself, said with great presence of mind: ‘No, Mr. Sykes, we don’t do that business; you—er—you merely kiss my hand. It’s more Venetian.’ ‘Oh, come, Miss Terry,’ expostulated Mr. Sykes, with an engaging leer; ‘you’re cuttin’ all the “fat” out of my part.’

When we put up at an inn, we were generally ‘taken in and done for’ on commercial terms, and allowed, as a great privilege, to use the commercial-room. The etiquette and ceremonial of that sanctum was strict and quaint. The commercial gentlemen—or ‘K.G.’s,’ as they playfully termed themselves—were always extraordinarily amiable and hospitable and tolerant of ‘artistic’ vagaries. They were certainly Bayards as compared with our company. But generally the smaller-salaried actors stayed in theatrical lodgings; these, as a rule, were terribly stuffy, dirty little dens, but cheap. I used usually to find facing my bed a grinning lithograph of a popular country comedian called Joe Eldred, who, I fancy, used to present this work of art to the various landladies in part discharge of his bill. I also had, for my sins, to subsist a good deal on a favourite stew of his, strongly flavoured with onions and Worcester sauce.

Most of my hostesses would produce at the end of the week a visitors' book, in which one was expected to write his name, together with some complimentary sentiment. The most popular seemed to be, 'A home from home.' I once simply wrote, 'Quoth the raven . . . , ' and the landlady, who didn't understand the quotation, was profuse in her thanks. I believe to this day she shows it with pride to her visitors.

The pathetic feature of minor theatrical touring is the number of wistful girls. There must be hundreds of them wandering about the country from one small town to another, nearly all of them pretty and amiable and well-mannered, who have to keep up a certain amount of appearance on tiny, irregular salaries, and save enough to keep them during the months they are out of engagement. As far as I could ever see, they live mostly on bread-and-butter and tea. They never complain—at least, never about anything serious, only now and then about some little professional slight. They travel long night journeys with no further toilet luxury than a cherished old powder-puff—almost bald from faithful service—jealously treasured in a corner of a shabby little purse. They are always ready, and even eager, to study long parts at a few hours' notice. The only glimmer of light in each poor girl's life is, I fear, a spark of hope twinkling

ahead of her, as she lies awake staring into the night, that one day a London manager will chance to be passing through Barmby-on-the-Marsh, will see her play Pauline, and carry her off to fame and fortune. But she never catches her Will-o'-the-wisp.

I have a very vivid recollection of the last few days of my first theatrical tour. We finished at Newcastle. I was staying at the Crown and Mitre with Kelly and his wife. I developed a kind of ague—alternate fits of fever and shivering, with a good deal of sickness—and I had a head which ached as though it contained a cannon-ball. My kind employers begged me to give up my part; but, although it was a small one, there was no one to take my place, and I should have caused an infinite deal of trouble if I had given in. So I insisted on playing. The last two nights, during performance, I had to lie on the stage in the first entrance wrapped in blankets while waiting for my various cues. I travelled back to London on Saturday night in a third-class carriage full of my boisterous companions, all smoking pipes and all playing cards. I managed to get a few hours' sleep by lying under the seat, where there were a few inches of breathable air.

When I reached home, I sent for a general practitioner in the neighbourhood, who told me I

was 'a bit run down,' and prescribed a tonic, generous diet, and plenty of exercise. After a day or two of unspeakable misery we called in Hermann Weber, who immediately sent me to bed, and told me I had been suffering for over a week from typhoid fever. Many years afterwards I was amused by a young actor, who applied to me for an engagement in some company I was organizing, who said: 'I have a slight claim upon you, Mr. Brookfield, because my sister was once engaged to be married to the doctor who first attended you when you had typhoid.' He was alluding to the general practitioner.

My attack was a pretty bad one. Sir William Jenner was called in in consultation. He was a delightful man, and his 'bedside manner' was a lesson to all young doctors. He would enter the room slowly, fold up his great-coat, put his hat on the top of it, with his gloves inside, and then settle down into an easy-chair and converse for awhile upon general topics, as though you were the only patient he had in the world.

About four years ago, when I was living in the Isle of Wight, I got into a railway-carriage at Southampton, and discovered that my only companion was Sir William Jenner, on his way from Osborne. He had attended three members of my family at various times, besides myself. However,

when he chanced to glance my way there was no recognition in his kind old eyes nor in his refined, if somewhat Mongolian, features. But I was determined to renew our acquaintance, and I presently introduced myself. ‘Of course, you don’t remember me, Sir William,’ I said; ‘but you may perhaps remember my father, whom you attended in his last illness in 1874;’ and I mentioned my father’s name. Sir William’s professional memory immediately awoke. ‘Of course, yes!’ he exclaimed; ‘I remember the case.’ And he recapitulated every symptom and every variation of my father’s illness as though he were reading from a diary. ‘Then,’ he proceeded, ‘I remember I attended *you* for typhoid in 1879. There was a little complication, I recollect, which gave us a certain amount of trouble.’ And he proceeded to recall every detail of the ‘little complication.’ ‘And didn’t I attend your mother in 1881?’ he proceeded, having once pigeon-holed the family, as it were. And again he reviewed every detail of *her* case.

Presently, on the same journey, he described to me how once in his student days he had started to go to the old pit of the Haymarket Theatre, in order, not so much to see the plays performed, as to get a glimpse of Her Majesty the Queen and the Prince Consort, who were to honour the theatre with their presence that night. ‘We had to wait—

a great crowd of us—for ever so long outside the theatre, waiting for the doors to open,' he said. 'At last the time came. The inside barrier was removed, and we all pressed turbulently forward. But all of a sudden—whether it was done deliberately or not I can't say—I heard a tearing sound, and I discovered that my coat had been torn in two from the tails to the collar. I hailed a coach and drove home in high dudgeon, and I exclaimed to myself, "I'm d——d if I'll ever go and see the Queen again." Which only shows,' he added with a humorous twinkle, as he settled himself into the comfortable cushions of the carriage, 'that one ought not to speak without knowing.'

As soon as I had recovered from my typhoid—indeed, before I was allowed out at nights—I was again in search of an engagement. And it was again through the kind offices of Henry Kemble that I presently got one. He gave me a card of introduction to John Hollingshead. I spent about five hours a day for over a week between the front and the stage door of the Gaiety Theatre endeavouring to obtain an interview with that kindly humorist, but his well-trained officials always sent me where he was not. At last I met him by chance in Wellington Street, and in my nervous excitement I pressed upon him, not only Kemble's card, but a warm shilling, which I had carried for days in my

palm as a reward for him who should finally take me into the manager's presence.

Hollingshead engaged me forthwith to play at the Crystal Palace in the great Christmas pantomime entitled 'Jack the Giant-killer ; or, Harlequin Fairy Spiteful, Good King Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table.' My part was that of King Arthur, described in the programme as '*a good sovereign worth twenty shillings in the pound*'—a very fair sample of the humour that pervaded the entire book of the pantomime.

Before I left home the morning of our first rehearsal, my dear mother implored me with tears in her eyes to make a concession to the prejudice of my brother, who had all along been opposed to my going on to the stage, and to change my name. This I firmly refused to do. I knew that she herself had no wish that I should assume a pseudonym, so I disregarded her entreaties, and drove to the Gaiety Theatre with the set determination to appear in the bills in my own full name. But my pride had a terrible fall. I was standing in a corner with a group of other young aspirants, when Mr. Robert Soutar, the stage-manager, came up to us. 'Are you the gentlemen who are playing in the opening?' he inquired. We murmured that we were. 'Well, with regard to your names in the programme, we're using the fish sauces this year. You'll be Mr.

Burgess, you're Mr. Worcester, you're Mr. Lazenby, and you're Mr. Harvey.' And he passed on. There was no appeal from his decision, and I accordingly had to appear as 'Mr. F. Burgess.'

There is a curious unwritten law or custom in pantomime that the clown has the exclusive right to any extra sums to be made by advertising trade wares in the 'comic scenes.' There was a terrible scene 'behind' one afternoon, when the gentleman who played 'Gorgibuster' the giant came on in a front scene in the 'opening' with an enormous 'property' ocarina, and pretended to play a solo, which was really played in the orchestra. The clown discovered that the giant had entered into a contract with the proprietor of the ocarina stall, and accordingly waited for his brother artist and chastised him. The giant retaliated, I remember, by coming early to the theatre a few days later and putting broken glass into the clown's tights, but, fortunately, this was discovered in time.

It was during this pantomime engagement that I had the good fortune to receive an offer, again through Henry Kemble's influence, to go to the Bancrofts', who were about to open the Haymarket Theatre with a revival of *Money*. Hollingshead very good-naturedly released me at a moment's notice, and I at once began rehearsing. I was cast for Sharp, the solicitor who reads the will. Both

the Bancrofts were, and are, as everyone knows, extraordinarily kind, but I remember feeling a little bewildered after I had shyly read through the will for the first time. ‘Mrs. B.’, as she was always called in those days, beckoned me to her, and said, ‘*Excellent*, Mr. Brookfield, quite excellent! but don’t you think you might take it perhaps a *shade* more rapidly? “Sharp,” you know—that’s the key to the character. *He* doesn’t care twopence about old Mordaunt; he simply wants to get through his business and hurry on somewhere else. So next time a *little* bit quicker, if you don’t mind.’ And the next moment ‘B.’ linked his arm in mine and took me on one side, and said with kindly earnestness, ‘First rate, my dear fellow, quite first rate! but just a *trifle* hurried, don’t you think? These old family solicitors, don’t you know, they like to take their time. This old fellow drew up the will himself most likely, and he’d enjoy ladling out his own stuff, so next time a *little* bit slower, if you don’t mind.’

I wish stage-managers of to-day could have seen, or, if they ever saw, would remember, how Bancroft conducted rehearsals. The plays he produced were quite as elaborately mounted as those of to-day (he was, of course, the first manager to give elaborate mounting to modern comedy), and to my mind they were far better acted. And yet he gave us very

short rehearsals. ‘Supers’ (or ‘extra ladies and gentlemen,’ as they were beginning to be called) were summoned at ten, ‘principals’ at eleven, and we all finished at one. The only officials superintending rehearsal were Bancroft himself and his faithful henchman, Mr. Edward Hastings. Occasionally an author would appear in the stalls. But nowadays there are often to be seen on the stage at once (i.) the actor-manager, (ii.) the ‘producer,’ (iii.) the ‘literary adviser,’ (iv.) the stage-manager, (v.) a ballet-master to teach bows and curtsies, (vi.) the prompter, (vii.) the author, and (viii., ix., x., etc.)—anyone who likes to offer a suggestion ; the result being that rehearsals last till five or six o’clock in the evening, the company get tired to death and make little or no progress.

The Bancrofts opened the Haymarket Theatre on January 31, 1880. I always associate that evening with Frank Marshall, of the cauliflower head, who was one of the gentlest, kindest-hearted creatures that ever lived. I shall never forget his extraordinary goodness to my mother on that first night. The fog was so dense that one could not see a yard before him. Frank Marshall, who knew my mother only slightly, seeing that she was without escort, insisted on conducting her home to Thurloe Place, which was entirely out of his own direction, a long journey at midnight, through a

choking black fog, the cabman leading his horse. Most young men of to-day would consider they had done their duty amply were they merely to call a cab.

Poor Frank Marshall had lost a finger in early life, and wore a kid finger-stall partially to conceal the deficiency. He was very popular, not only for his sterling goodness, but also for his many accomplishments. Amongst these, one of the most highly-rated among his graminivorous friends was a pretty talent in the mixing of a salad. Accordingly, at dinner-time at the Sheridan Club, as his friends dropped in to dine, and saw him commencing lovingly to *fatiguer* a crisp cos - lettuce in a tiny bath of oil and vinegar, they would presume on his good nature, and cry, 'Frank, make me one at the same time!' 'Oh, and, Frank, make enough for me too!' And, beaming with satisfaction at the compliment to his skill, Frank would call for more lettuces, and chives, and tarragon, and triple the size of the perfumed bouquet in front of him. 'Don't you put *sugar* in?' inquired one, anxious to appear a connoisseur. 'Heavens, no!' Frank replied; 'no one but a German would dream of such an outrage.' 'I know a fellow,' exclaimed another, 'who always puts in a teaspoonful of absinthe.' 'That's a New York barbarism,' retorted Frank blandly, continuing to chop up his herbs into

minute fragments and to mix his salad his own way, which he knew to be unrivalled. And, sure enough, the end crowned the work. Everyone was delighted. A few more neighbours begged for stray leaves, and finally one enthusiastic gourmand wiped the bowl round with a ball of bread, and turned up his eyes in ecstasy as he gulped down the savoury morsel. But the face of the founder of the feast wore a troubled expression. ‘What’s the matter, Frank?’ asked one of his friends. ‘Oh, nothing,’ replied Frank, peering round the polished bowl, ‘only—only I seem to have lost my finger-stall!’

CHAPTER VI

Odell—His discretion—His medical science—His susceptibility—His visit to America—His reticence—His appreciation of detail—My experience as a teacher of elocution—As a stage-manager to amateurs—An aspirant who was to take London by storm.

IT was when I joined the Haymarket company that I first met Odell, probably the most remarkable and popular Bohemian in London. There are many men who claim to be Bohemians on the strength of ill-manners and a soiled shirt. But Odell is a genuine gipsy by temperament. He could not be conventional if he tried, nor could he if he would allow a thought for his personal interest to trammel his picturesque humour. I imagine that the Bancrofts engaged him, as a comedian of the same school as the late George Honey, for the part of Graves. Then, I expect, Arthur Cecil rebelled against the part of Sir John Vesey, and this may have been how the latter part came to be finally allotted to Odell. I do not believe that Odell was ever born, and this would account for the fact that no one knows his age. I believe that when the

Savage Club was started they found him there. His appearance has never changed. When I first saw him he had very long hair, which hung about his shoulders. He wore a sombrero hat, and a very long frock-coat, green with age (the last time I saw him, a year or two ago, I fancy he was wearing the same). He presented a striking contrast to the well-groomed young men who formed the bulk of the company. We considered ourselves a very smart lot. It was popularly believed that, in place of the ordinary address-book to be found in most stage-halls, the door-keeper of the Haymarket was merely provided with a copy of Burke's 'Landed Gentry'; also that anyone aspiring to join us had to drive a four-in-hand up Suffolk Street and down again, and that his engagement depended upon how he turned the corner. In such exclusive company the unconformable Odell found few friends. I think Kemble and I were his only intimates. Miss Linda Dietz especially disliked him. I don't know why, nor, very likely, did she.

One night, just before Holy Week, during which the theatre was to be closed, several of us were sitting in the green-room boasting of where we were going to spend our holiday. One was going to Badminton to stay with the Duke of Beaufort; another was going to run up to Scarborough to visit 'dear old Londesborough'; another was afraid

'the dear Duchess would be really offended' if he disappointed her—when Odell entered the room. Everyone was for a moment struck dumb at his audacity in venturing so suddenly to intrude. Miss Dietz swung round her chair, and turned her back upon him. As soon as we had recovered, however, someone resumed the conversation. 'And where are *you* going for your holiday, Miss Dietz?' 'Oh,' exclaimed Odell, replying for her, in his drawling voice of indescribable quality, 'we're not going to tell *anyone* where we're going!'

On another occasion poor Mrs. Bancroft had wounded her hand rather severely with a bread-knife, and she was obliged to appear with her arm in a sling. We all stood round her, praised her pluck, and expressed our sympathy. She herself, however, made very light of the casualty. 'Sir Henry Thompson says it will soon be well,' she told us. 'But he said it was a pretty bad gash. He said it was very lucky for me that I'm not a drinker. I drink very little besides milk and now and then a little out of "Bogie's" pint of claret, so that my flesh heals extraordinarily quickly. It seems that's not so with the poor people who drink. A slight wound may be a very serious thing to anyone with a quantity of alcohol in the system.' 'Oh yes,' observed Odell, from the back of the group, 'that's a very well-known fact. Indeed,

I often cut my finger, just to see if I've had enough.'

When the world was many years younger, Odell, at some small country theatre, played the Judge in a version of 'Effie Deans.' In an early part of the play it was his duty to condemn the heroine to death. But he was so affected by her piteous appeal, as well as by her beauty and charm, that, instead of imposing the extreme penalty of the law, he stopped the case, acquitted her, and told her that she left the court without a stain upon her character. He proceeded to thank the jury for the attention they had paid to the case, and told them they had exemption for five years. He then rose, and prepared to leave the court. No one knew what to do. The stage-manager flew to the side and, concealing his fury as well as he could, implored the actor to go back and amend his decision. Accordingly, Odell resumed the throne of justice, and, calling back the unfortunate Effie, said to her in solemn tones : 'Prisoner at the bar, the pardon that I late pronounced was an idle jest. I did but dally for a moment with your feelings. The actual sentence of the court upon you is, that you be taken back to the cell from which you came. . . .' And he proceeded to sentence her to death in due form.

Odell has often threatened to go to America, and on such occasions he has been fêted at farewell

suppers by his myriads of friends, and has remained at home, to their great relief and delight. The only time he actually went to that interesting Transatlantic suburb he told no one. It so chanced that Pinero was going by the same boat. It was that brilliant playwright's first excursion of the kind, and he left this country with a good deal of ceremony. There was a special carriage full of correspondents, who travelled to Liverpool to see him off. They accompanied the illustrious author on board his vessel, and as the tender left the side of the Cunarder there was much cheering and waving of handkerchiefs, and even weeping. As the little boat faded out of sight in the direction of Liverpool, and the ocean greyhound bade her farewell through a hoarse steam-hooter, and dipped her nose into the waves, Pinero, himself a little overcome by emotion, turned from the taffrail, and suddenly saw, seated at his elbow, the quaint form of his old friend Odell, looking exactly as usual—the same coat, the same hat, the same locks. ‘Odell!’ cried Pinero, in astonishment. ‘Why, what on earth are you doing here?’ ‘I’m—I’m seeing myself off,’ replied Odell simply.

The skipper at first fought rather shy of Odell. He may have suspected him to be a pirate in disguise; but after a few days, when he found how popular a passenger he had on board, he resolved to unbend. He met our friend on the upper deck.

'Good-morning,' said the captain, without apparently securing any attention. 'How are you, Mr. Odell?' he proceeded to enquire. 'That's *my* business,' replied Odell, as he turned on his heel and undulated away from his interlocutor.

There was an old Commodore on board who, for the first few nights of the voyage, used to thrill the company in the saloon with terrible tales of the sea. 'One night, when we were rounding the Horn,' he narrated one evening, 'it was a bitter cold night, and there was a poor lad I'd sent up aloft to the maintop to reef the sky-sail, for I felt there was a puff of wind coming. It came sooner than I'd reckoned from the nor'-west-and-by-nothe, and caught her fair on her beam. The boy—I suppose his fingers were numbed with the cold—fell from aloft, and struck the gunwale a little for'ard of the main-chains, and if you'll believe me, ladies and gentlemen, his body was cut *clean in two!* Half of it fell into the ocean, and the other half remained on deck!' Everyone was awed, for a few seconds no one spoke, until at last Odell remarked very gently, 'Yes, and the worst of it was *he broke his watch-glass.*'

I had a curious experience in my early days on the stage as a teacher of elocution. My old friend Henry Warr called upon me one day, and said, 'Oh, Charley, there's a very exceptionally nice

woman, a friend of mine, Mrs. Arthur Cohen, wife of the Member for Southwark : she wants someone to teach her young people to read aloud, and I said she couldn't do better than send for you.' 'But I couldn't possibly,' I remonstrated. 'I haven't the faintest idea how to set about such a thing. What is there to be taught? and how can one teach it?' 'Oh, nonsense!' said Warr ; 'it'll come quite easily to you. It'll do you a lot of good, and they're charming people.' Accordingly I called — in Holland Park I think it was. I found Mrs. Cohen, as my friend had described, a most delightful woman beaming with kindness and good-humour, but I was a little taken aback when she presently asked me, 'And have you had much success with your system of teaching, Mr. Brookfield?' 'Well—er,' I stammered, 'my system has—er—so far been more —er—theoretical than practical.' Mrs. Cohen made, no doubt, good-natured allowance for my obvious nervousness, and told me to call the next afternoon at five to give my first lesson. The following day, sick with apprehension, I threw into a handbag a few books—'Bell's Modern Speaker,' 'Carpenter's Popular Readings,' and a Shakespeare, and made my way to Holland Park. It was a foggy evening, but I presently made out the palace for which I was bound looming through the mist. I had to walk up and down once or twice before I

could summon up courage to seek admission. At last I hardened my heart, ran blindly up the steps, and rang the bell. ‘Are the young ladies at home?’ I asked. ‘In the dining-room, sir,’ replied the butler; and I was ushered into a lofty, comfortable room, where I saw five or six young ladies, ranging in age from seventeen to six, perhaps, seated round a large table. I made them an awkward obeisance, and sidled into a chair between the fire and the lamp. The girls said nothing, but simply stared at me with frank, wide-open eyes. ‘I think our best plan will be,’ I said, opening my bag, ‘for me first of all to read to you—say the Trial scene from the “Merchant of Venice”—and for you afterwards to read it out to me.’ I then cleared my throat, and commenced: ‘“What, is Antonio here?” “Ready, so please your Grace.” “I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer a stony adversary” (here I noticed, rather to my dismay, the eldest young lady slipped out of the room), “an inhuman wretch incapable of pity, void and empty from any dram of mercy.”’ (Here the second girl made a swift and adroit exit.) By the time I had got to ‘brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint’ I was alone with the six-year-old, whose brow puckered, whose lip curled, and who suddenly tore out of the room after her sisters, shrieking for all she was worth. I was wondering if this was a common experience of

elocution-masters, and, if so, what they generally did next, when the eldest sister returned, grave and erect, and said, ‘Mamma thinks there must be some mistake. Will you kindly tell us who you are?’ ‘Isn’t this Mrs. Cohen’s?’ I inquired evasively, as the truth began to dawn upon me. ‘No,’ replied the girl; ‘Mrs. Cohen’s is No. 6, a few doors lower down.’

An actor may sometimes add a guinea or two to his banking account by officiating as stage-manager to amateurs, but it is a position requiring an infinite amount of tact. I remember Harry Kemble was once engaged to produce ‘The Parvenu’ for some distinguished company of unprofessional comedians, and although he had played in the piece at the Court Theatre during a very long run, they decided unanimously that he knew nothing whatever about it.

‘Now then, Tracey,’ said Kemble, ‘you’ve got to get a little more over.’

‘Why?’ inquired the young Baronet, who was playing the light comedy part, with a glassy stare.

‘Why, to make room for Claude Glynne’s entrance,’ explained the stage-manager.

‘Excuse me, Kemble,’ replied the other, with a shake of the head, ‘that’s not my reading of the part at all. I feel the fellow standing perfectly still—rigid!’

'Besides which,' the 'juvenile man' interposed, 'I don't make my entrance there at all.'

'Yes, you do,' said Kemble. 'You *must*, because that's the path leading from the house, and you're supposed to be just—'

'Ah, that may be,' said the Claude, with a withering smile; 'I don't know anything about that. I only know that I come down centre. After all, it's *my* scene.'

And after their would-be tutor had left them they talked him over at tea-time.

'*Isn't* it extraordinary?' they said. 'A man with all that experience—a dear, good-natured old chap and a very fair actor; but he knows no more about stage-management than the man in the moon.'

I bore this in mind when, the following Christmas, I was engaged to stage-manage some private theatricals at a house on the Thames Embankment. I forget what the play was; I fancy it was not by a professional playwright. I was given an easy-chair, and I was allowed to smoke a cigar.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' I said, producing a writing-block and a pencil, 'I don't know this play, nor have I the pleasure of knowing anything about your respective abilities. I propose that you should go straight through the piece your own way, and I will make notes. Then we will go through it a second time, and I shall know what to tell you.'

The rehearsal commenced. Everybody entered where they pleased ; that is to say, each one reached the centre of the stage by the nearest route from where he happened to be standing or sitting—generally across the footlights. People got in front of one another ; if a chair was in anyone's way he merely said, 'Of course, that mustn't be there,' and handed it into the audience ; and when the said chair was presently needed by another character, he simply exclaimed, 'I say, there ought to be a chair here,' and it was handed back. Then tea was brought in to the other end of the room, and the leading lady had to leave her place on the stage to pour it out, and called out her lines from, as it were, the back of the pit. But at last I gathered the play had come to an end, so I ranged the company before me and asked them :

'Who has been coaching you ?'

'How do you mean ?' inquired my hostess sweetly.

'I mean,' I explained, 'who had been training you before you sent for me ? Who taught you to move, to speak—to act, in fact ?'

'Why, nobody,' said they, looking from one to the other.

'Well, I can only say it's the most *extraordinary* thing I ever saw !' I said, not without a substratum of truth. 'Here's my block for notes ;' and I held it

up. ‘Not a word upon it. I haven’t a *single* suggestion to make. I can’t be of any use to you. You’ve taught *me* a lesson, I assure you. It has often puzzled me to know how amateurs managed with only five or six short rehearsals to perform heavy plays which take us five or six weeks of hard work to produce. I’ve come to the conclusion that it’s a gift, that what we labour and strive after, and generally fail to attain, comes quite naturally to you.’

My remarks were greeted with enthusiastic and corroborative applause. Each of the company in turn took me aside and made me confidences.

‘You know, my dear fellah,’ one said, ‘it *did* go smoothly. But d’you know why? Because *I* held it together. I *wouldn’t* let it drop. Didn’t you notice?’

Another said: ‘I’m awfully glad you were pleased, but, by George! it was a job, having to tell every one of ’em what to do. I shan’t play another year. It takes it out of me too much. It does indeed. I *said* I wouldn’t act this time, but they talked me over.’

The one who played the low-comedy part told me he had had several offers to go upon the stage, but he felt it wouldn’t be fair on his actor friends. It would interfere with their getting a living. While one of the ladies told me that Clarkson, the perruquier, had told her he considered that in tragic parts

she was quite the equal of Ellen Terry. But one and all agreed that never had they had so thoroughly competent a professional coach.

'What we should have done without you!' exclaimed my hostess, with raised eyebrows and a sad smile.

On the evening of the performance my name appeared in large letters on the programmes—'The whole produced under the direction of Mr. Charles Brookfield, of the Haymarket Theatre.' Everyone was delighted. I was publicly thanked before the curtain, and it was generally admitted that, whatever might be my merits as an actor, they were entirely eclipsed by my genius for stage-management.

Many years ago, when I had been quite a short time on the stage, and when my opinion was even more valueless than it would be now, an old gentleman and his wife called upon me with their daughter to consult me about her 'becoming an actress.' The father was foreign—Mexican or South American—and spoke with great enthusiasm about his daughter's genius and the certainty of her success.

'We propose to take Drury Lane, just for one or two matinées, that the world may see what my little girl can do,' he remarked. 'Then we should simply sit at home and consider the offers from managers as they came in. I don't think I should let her play every night. Three, or at most four, times a week

would be quite enough. Some ordinary performance might be given on the other nights. The only question in my mind is, in which walk of the drama to reveal her talent first—tragedy or comedy? Lady Macbeth or Beatrice?

I said all I could to dissuade them from their scheme, and I pointed out that it is very seldom the person for whose advantage a special performance is given who reaps the benefit; that they would perhaps find, after all their trouble and expense, they had merely enabled the press to discover a new Macduff or a novelty in Don Johns. They obviously resented my advice, saluted me rather stiffly, and withdrew.

Ten or twelve years later I was on Drury Lane stage. I had been superintending a rehearsal of a burlesque which Sir Augustus Harris and I had written on 'Pagliacci' (the title of which was so abject that I blush when I recall it) for the Palace Theatre. As I went out, a young woman touched me on the arm.

'Oh, Mr. Brookfield,' she said, '*could* you give me a line?'

'I'm rather afraid that's impossible,' I answered. 'You see, it's only a sketch. We're limited as to time, and every line makes a difference.'

'Oh, but *one word* would do,' she pleaded. 'At present I'm just standing on, and that means only

twelve shillings a week. If you could give me a word to speak, it would bring it up to a pound.'

'Very well. I'll speak to Sir Augustus,' I said.
'Who are you?'

She told me her name, which conveyed nothing to me.

'Of course you can't remember me,' she said, with a sad little smile. 'My father and mother brought me to see you, in Thurloe Place, years ago. Just before my matinée of "Much Ado." Perhaps you didn't hear of it? There was some mistake, or a counter-attraction or something, and it wasn't noticed in the papers—at least, only in one or two. We gave up the idea of the "Macbeth" matinée after that. *Will* you do what you can?'

I assured her that I would. I didn't dare ask her if her father and mother were still alive. There was a *farouche* air about her which seemed to repel inquiry. But I spoke to my collaborator, who at once consented that she should have a line to speak (I think it was: 'Aren't you coming in, old chap?'). The next day at rehearsal I sent for her. But I learned that it had been decided to reduce the number of 'extras' by six, and that my unfortunate friend was one of those who had gone. No one knew her address.

CHAPTER VII

The ‘leading juvenile’—His social popularity—His wiles—His trysts—His imagination—The Thames Valley—A colony of dipsomaniacs—A young man who lived by his wits.

THE ‘leading juveniles’ of twenty years ago were a wonderful study. We once had two in the Hay-market company at the same time. Mr. Lancelot had been a ‘juvenile’ for a good many years—about fifteen, perhaps—whereas Mr. Beaumains had only recently left one of the learned professions to adorn the stage. Accordingly, he watched every action of Mr. Lancelot, even off the stage, in order to learn how to comport himself as a leading romantic West End actor should. If Mr. Lancelot chanced to exhibit a peeress’s card amongst the invitations which proclaimed his social popularity from the frame of his dressing-glass, Mr. Beaumains would follow suit to the best of his ability by displaying in the margin of his mirror a request for his company from, say, the lady of a City knight. If Lancelot, during his ‘wait,’ stood in the prompt entrance, becomingly dressed in sky-blue satin breeches and a laced

ballet-shirt (we were playing a 'powder' piece just then), apparently watching the scene, and all unconscious that he was the cynosure of three pairs of bright eyes in the royal box, Beaumains would appear the following evening in the opposite prompt first entrance, attired in olive silk breeches and a shirt of soft white *batiste*, and angle for a glance from the corresponding stage-box on the other side.

Once, when we were all assembled in the green-room, Lancelot burst in with an anxious brow. 'Has anyone seen an envelope,' he inquired, 'addressed to me in a lady's handwriting? There's nothing in it, only there's a d——d great coronet which somebody might recognise. It's not the sort of thing one wants to leave lying about.' It was never found. But a short time afterwards Beaumains made a similar entrance. 'Has anyone seen an envelope lying about addressed to me in a feminine hand?' he asked eagerly. 'It's nothing of importance, only there's an infernal great coat-of-arms outside, and one doesn't want to set people gossiping.' This compromising *pièce de circonstance* was never forthcoming, either. A minor member of the company wasted the whole of the next afternoon in manufacturing an enormous sort of pantomime envelope, about 30 inches by 18, which he emblazoned with the royal arms in heraldic colours. He chose a moment when both our 'juveniles' were

in the green-room to drop this work of art on the carpet, and then appealed to the company. ‘Has anyone seen an envelope addressed to me with a devilish great big sort of escutcheon thing on it? I wouldn’t have it create a false impression for the world.’ Most of us were amused, but neither Lancelot nor Beaumains took the poor man’s jest at all in good part.

One night we were all smoking in Lancelot’s dressing-room (in defiance of regulations and fire assurance companies), when his dresser appeared.

‘Could I speak to you a moment, sir?’

‘Well?’

‘It’s—it’s a private message, sir.’

‘Never mind, you idiot! What is it?’

‘Mrs. Overvie-Tracy’s compliments, sir, and her brougham will be waiting for you at the corner of Suffolk Street at a quarter-past eleven.’

‘You infernal fool!’ cried Lancelot. ‘How *dare* you blurt out a private ——! Get out!’ Then, turning to us: ‘I shall have to sack that scoundrel. Conceive his coming and bellowing out a poor devil of a woman’s name like that!’

One of the comedians slipped out of the room for a minute, and then came back. Presently *his* dresser put in his head.

‘Could I ’ave ’alf a word with you, sir, on a private matter?’

'Nonsense, you infernal rascal! Never mind these gentlemen. Out with it at once!' cried his master, rakishly cocking his three-cornered hat.

'The Duchess of Redcliffe's compliments, sir, and I was to remind you that the last Putney bus leaves Piccadilly Circus at ten minutes to twelve.'

Lancelot 'smiled at the wit, but never forgave the satire.'

The unfortunate Mr. Beaumains came to a tragic end. He fell upon bad times some years ago, and, sooner than accept the managerial valuation of his services, he put an end to his life. Poor Lancelot is now so invalided that he gets, I am afraid, but little enjoyment out of life. It seems a very few years ago (and yet it is over twenty) that we were all living in the Thames Valley. Beaumains had a house-boat, so nicely poised that I remember when Corney Grain and I once called upon him he had to shift the refrigerator and buffet to the port side of the saloon before we could sit safely to starboard. Lancelot had a little eight-roomed cottage near Shepperton Station. But he had an imagination which must have been given him by a fairy godmother. The cottage was called 'Montressor Villa.' Lancelot dropped the 'Villa,' and 'Montressor' immediately became—in his mind's eye, Horatio—a turreted, ivy-covered family mansion standing in the centre of a well-timbered estate, with a trout-

stream; while at the same moment the neighbouring hired loose-box where he kept his pony became ‘my stables,’ and the tool-shed where he kept five unruly cross-bred collies ‘my kennels.’ I one day met Mr. Thurston, the landlord of the Woburn Park Hotel, who pulled up his dogcart and accosted me. ‘I beg your pardon, Mr. Brookfield,’ he said, ‘but I’ve had a letter from Mr. Lancelot asking me to come over to “Montressor” to give him an estimate for thoroughly stocking his wine-cellars. I don’t *know* really where “Montressor” lies, as I haven’t been settled in this part of the country long. Could you give me any rough idea as to the extent of the cellarage there?’ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘it all depends whether Mr. Lancelot intends to use the cupboard in the scullery or the cupboard under the stairs. But neither would hold, I should say, more than a dozen and a half.’ I believe the ultimate order was for six bottles of whisky, six bottles of claret, a bottle of brandy, and six siphons.

I had a small furnished cottage at Halliford, a tiny hamlet that joins on to Shepperton, on the Thames. In the bar-parlour of the Ship Hotel there used to foregather a wonderful little band of stanch old purple-faced dipsomaniacs—Mr. Fuller (steward over much of the neighbouring property), Captain Tanner, R.N. (retired), Major Belcher (retired), and Dr. Botting (retired, I think, owing

to a little misunderstanding with the Royal College of Physicians). The whole four, however, were seldom assembled together. ‘Where’s old Tanner to-day?’ Major Belcher would ask. ‘Poor old Tanner!’ Dr. Botting would reply. ‘He had a nasty fall last night coming back from the Anchor. Stumbled against one of those infernal white posts by the corner there, bruised his knee, and got a nasty abrasion on his elbow. I’m keeping him in bed to-day.’ ‘Poor old chap! They’re infernally awkward things those posts, especially late at night. I must see if we can’t have ’em done away with,’ Mr. Fuller would remark sympathetically. Then Major Belcher would propose a stroll to view the spot, and, after standing for awhile round the uprooted impediment, they would saunter into the Anchor and drink to their friend’s speedy recovery. Captain Tanner would reappear, plastered and bandaged, the next evening, and, after receiving the congratulations of his friends on his recovery, he would ask, ‘But where’s the doctor?’ ‘Poor old Botting! He got very bad last night,’ Major Belcher would reply. ‘He *would* have it there was a hole in the floor, and that a brass alligator was looking out at him. So we put him to bed. He’ll be as right as rain in a day or two.’ I remember one of the party complained—with some hesitation, lest he should be laughed at for his fears—that the

shadows cast by a particular row of trees on the road from the railway-station filled him with alarm when he had to come that way by night. ‘But I’m not surprised!’ cried Mr. Fuller, the steward. ‘Those infernal horse - chestnuts! Enough to frighten any man! I’ll have ’em pollarded tomorrow.’ And he did.

There was a young fellow named Schroder living at Shepperton in those days. He was the son of a well-known classical scholar. He was a tall, powerful chap of four-and-twenty, well educated, clever, and very amusing. But he would not work at anything. His father, in despair, had made an arrangement with Mr. Bennett, the landlord of the Anchor, by which this sturdy young rogue was to be supplied with bed and breakfast, but nothing else. ‘If he wants dinner and supper, he must earn them,’ the Spartan father had said. Schroder possessed nothing in the world but one suit of flannels, a pipe, and a wonderfully clever black spaniel called Rook. When the flannels needed washing, Schroder went to bed, and remained there until they came home. The only way in which he could ever have been said to earn a meal was by occasionally lending a hand to assist in pulling a boat up to Chertsey Bridge. He was an expert oarsman, and knew the river well. But he seldom went without his dinner. He had, if the phrase is permissible, a diffident

effrontery which was almost irresistible. He would burst into a private room during a dinner-party with a time-table in his hand, apologize profoundly, explain that he had thought the room had been empty, then proceed to consult his ABC, talking pleasantly all the time, discover that he had lost his last train, and interest the strangers in his imaginary misfortunes to such an extent that nine times out of ten they would press him to join their party. But his most ingenious method for gaining admittance to a circle of strangers was by means of his dog Rook. Schroder would lie on the lawn of the Chertsey Bridge Hotel on a Saturday or Sunday morning, when steam-launches were apt to stop there for luncheon. As soon as he had selected the party he would like to join, he would whisper to Rook, who would, apparently of his own accord, approach the new-comers and commence a series of tricks—walk on his hind-legs, turn round, stand on his head, turn somersaults, etc. ‘Rook ! Rook ! Come here, sii !’ Schroder would shout. But all to no effect. Rook would go stolidly on with his entertainment. Then his master would step forward, cap in hand, with his best manner, and say : ‘I’m afraid my dog’s annoying you. I’m most awfully sorry !’ ‘Oh no ! Not in the least ! I never *saw* such a clever dog,’ some dazzling damsel would reply sweetly. ‘Well, he *is* rather clever. I got

him in rather a peculiar way,' etc. And Schroder would instal himself with his new friends and entertain them until luncheon was announced. And then, invited or not, he would stroll into the hotel with them, pick up the wine-list, and say : 'I don't know if you know the wines here. I *can't* recommend their Carte Blanche. But their Clicquot's first-rate. We'd better have a magnum, hadn't we ?' It would only be about once in ten times that he would get kicked out with ignominy—and *then* he didn't mind.

Schroder, as a borrower, never committed the folly of killing the goose who laid the eggs of gold—or silver, as the case might be. He would 'try' the goose 'pretty high,' but never actually kill it. I fancy he had the gift of reckoning at a glance the 'touchable' value of those about him ; that is to say, he would calculate : A is good for three sixpenny drinks per diem, and five shillings now and then, say once a month ; B wouldn't stand frequent 'tapping'—£10 once, and a possible fiver later on, is about his form ; C is worth keeping for a desperate emergency : a telegram from abroad—say, 'Luggage lost, friends travelling, please send £50, urgent ; will explain,' or something of that kind. One afternoon he confided to me that he was in urgent need of a sovereign—I forgot for what specific purpose. But he told me this with no *arrière pensée*. He knew

that he had had all that he reckoned himself entitled to out of me for the time being, and he merely said, 'I want a sovereign badly,' as another might say, 'I want a holiday badly.' And I replied in the same sort of spirit, 'I'm sure I hope you'll manage to get it.' That evening, in the bar-parlour of the Ship, the conversation turned upon baldness (the missing member of the conclave upon this occasion was Major Belcher, who was temporarily indisposed with alcoholic blood-poisoning). Various specifics were reviewed, but presently Dr. Botting asserted, with the authority of a man of science, that no combination of tonics and emollients could equal a simple decoction of dock roots. A glimmer shone in the eye of Schroder, who until this moment had been sitting silent in a corner. 'Would you mind writing that down, doctor?' he asked, advancing to the table with a slip of paper and a pen. 'With pleasure, my dear boy,' said the doctor. And he proceeded to write out, with some difficulty, a simple receipt: 'Simmer dock roots in water, and rub in the strained liquid on the head daily.' 'And d'you mind signing it?' asked Schroder. 'Not at all,' replied the other, who rather enjoyed signing his name with the initials of his old degrees. And the slip of paper was duly embellished with a flourishing 'Alexander Botting, M.A., M.D., D.Sc.' The following morning Schroder called upon me early. He possessed,

as I said before, only a suit of flannels. But he knew various people within a small radius who between them could fit him out with a kit suitable for the City. On me he always reckoned for the top-hat, for our heads were much of a size. ‘I’m going up to town,’ he said, ‘to raise that quid I spoke to you about. I’ve no right to ask you, but if you *could* lend me half a crown for my fare, till tomorrow, I should be awfully obliged. And I won’t bother you again for ever so long. And may I borrow your hat? Thanks awfully! You shall have *that* back.’ And he sped on his way to borrow Hamley’s frock-coat, and Lamley’s trousers, and Bramley’s patent-leather boots. In the course of an hour or two he presented himself at the offices of Hiram Schwarzchild, the great financier, and sent up his card. Whether the merchant-prince mistook him for someone else or not I cannot say, but Schroder was shortly ushered into the august presence, and, quite unabashed, opened the conversation. ‘I have called, sir, in the hope of interesting you in a little industrial venture we are bringing out. Indeed, I am sanguine of persuading you to become our chairman——’ ‘Really, sir,’ stammered Schwarzchild, almost dumb with amazement, ‘I don’t know you, and I am not at all disposed——’ ‘Kindly hear me out,’ rejoined Schroder calmly. ‘This is the draft prospectus. Quite in the rough, I

need hardly tell you : The Botting Hair-Restorer Company, Limited ; capital, £30,000 in 30,000 shares of £1 each, whereof 40 are Founders' Shares. Issue of 29,960 ordinary shares payable as follows ——’ ‘I cannot spare you any more of my time, sir,’ interrupted the financier. ‘Will you be so good as to——’ ‘Directors,’ read out Schroder: ‘Captain Tanner, R.N., Major Belcher, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Schroder—that is myself—Dr. Botting, who will join the board after allotment. Temporary offices : the Ship Hotel, Halliford.’ ‘Leave my office !’ cried Schwarzchild. ‘If you prefer that we should work it privately—just you and I,’ suggested Schroder, in a rather confidential undertone. ‘Mr. Schmitz,’ shrieked the merchant, ‘turn this man out !’ But Schroder changed his tactics. He appealed to Mr. Schwarzchild, told him that he was an orphan, that he had never had a chance, that at last he had been dazzled by the prospect of making a fortune out of this discovery that he held in his hand—a discovery recently made by a distressed man of science, and in which, despite Mr. Schwarzchild’s indifference, he still believed there was a fortune. He even contrived to weep. Mr. Schwarzchild, who was a generously disposed man, softened towards the disappointed young stranger, and offered him a sovereign. ‘No, sir,’ replied Schroder. ‘I’m not quite reduced to that. But, so that there shall

be no element of favour in the matter, I will sell you this receipt for the nominal sum of £5.' And feeling that it was, after all, not much to pay to get rid of so persistent a visitor, Mr. Schwarzchild paid the money and secured all rights in the Botting nostrum.

One morning Schroder ran into the road opposite the Anchor and stopped three of his friends. 'Come in, you fellows!' he cried, beaming all over his face. Then he added, in an exultant whisper, 'There's a new barmaid, and *she doesn't yet know I'm not allowed credit!*' The four boon companions trooped into the little bar. 'Good-morning, Miss Middleditch,' said Schroder politely. 'We want—let's see—two best Scotch whiskies, one brandy, one gin, and a large and a small seltzer divided. And won't you join us yourself, Miss Middleditch?' 'Oh, thanks,' said that young lady languidly, 'I don't mind if I have a little drop of Benedictine.' 'Ah, *that's right*,' said Schroder cordially, adding, 'My number's 22.' The damsel served the drinks with the air of a banished peeress, humming a melancholy melody the while. 'My love to you,' she said graciously to the company as she raised her glass, and she proceeded to enter the amount of two and tenpence to the debit of No. 22. While she was thus engaged, Mr. Bennett the landlord entered suddenly, and took in the situation at a

glance. ‘Now then, Mr. Schroder,’ he exclaimed, ‘this is a great deal too bad. You know distinctly the understanding that my young ladies are not allowed to give you credit, and you take advantage—’ ‘Hush! hush!’ pleaded Schroder. ‘Before my guests! Mr. Bennett, what an outrage!’ ‘Oh, nonsense!’ retorted the landlord; ‘they know how you’re situated as well as you do. I call it dishonest. It’s a *theft*, that’s what it is.’ ‘Come, come, Bennett,’ said Schroder soothingly, ‘that’s a serious thing to say. I admit I exceeded my rights on this solitary occasion;’ and as he spoke he contrived, unseen by Bennett, to abstract a couple of sixpenny cigars from a box which lay open on the counter before him. ‘But I don’t see why we should quarrel about such a trifling escapade. Have a cigar, Bennett?’ and he proffered one of those which he had that instant stolen. ‘Well, thank you, Mr. Schroder; I—I think I will try one of yours. They’re not too strong, I hope? I don’t want to be unpleasant, you know, but business is business.’ And they lit their weeds at the same match. ‘I think you’ll like that cigar,’ said Schroder. ‘A little green, perhaps. I doubt if I’ve kept ‘em long enough.’

CHAPTER VIII

Percy Vernon—Stone's—The sporting tailors—The Café de l'Europe—The teetotum, and how to spin it—Half-crown-hunters and their methods—The Haymarket flower-girls—Polly.

IT was in the revival of the 'Overland Route' in 1882 that I first met a very amusing character who then made his début on the London stage, young Percy Vernon (who is now the third Baron Lyveden). He played the part of Captain Sebright, R.N., who has nothing to say (or does he exclaim 'Jenny!' as he comes on?), and only appears just before the fall of the curtain. Percy Vernon was extremely good-natured and imperturbably good-tempered. He had a curious affectation in those days of dropping his *h's*—in fact, of talking generally like one of Mr. Rudyard Kipling's chick-a-leary soldiers. A good deal of his humour was, I fancy, unconscious. There used to be in those days a little wizened stump of humanity who crawled about Piccadilly selling matches. As far as one could see, his anatomy ceased at the breast-bone. It was, as it

were, an animated bust on wheels, which propelled itself along with its hands. Vernon and I observed this unfortunate object struggling along the pavement one afternoon. Vernon gazed at it with a puzzled expression for a few seconds ; then, turning to me, he inquired in an undertone, ‘Lame, ain’t ’e ?’

In Pinero’s play of ‘Lords and Commons’ Vernon played my valet Pressinger, and at the beginning of the third act—an evening scene on a terrace, if I remember rightly—he had to come on with a cushion and some rugs, and arrange them on a stone bench. He was always eager for more to do, and he was accordingly enchanted when Bancroft told him he might hum an air as he came on. At the final dress rehearsal he discovered there were a few bars of music to take up the drop-scene. ‘ ’Ello !’ said he, ‘is Bucalossi goin’ to play that at night ?’ ‘Yes,’ I told him. ‘Well, but ’ow about my ’ummin’ ?’ he inquired. ‘Oh, if I were you,’ said I, ‘I should wait until the orchestra had finished, and then go on humming the same air.’ ‘Ho, that be blowed !’ cried Vernon ; ‘*I can’t ’um Italian !*

Vernon and I used often, after the theatre, to look into the back-room at Stone’s in Panton Street, where twenty years ago and more a very cosmopolitan society used to gather round a bowl of rum punch. There were Mr. Graves, the engraver ;

Adolphus Glover, of the War Office, and his friend Major Harding ; an old bootmaker, whose name I forget, who owned the greater part of Warrior Square, Hastings ; Henry Warr, an Admiralty Court barrister ; and two or three others, all smoking long clay pipes. William and Tom were the two waiters, and every New Year's Eve William, who was an old Yorkshireman, used to stand up and sing an old-fashioned song of forty or fifty verses about 'Parson Brown.' But in course of time Stone's changed hands, the old-fashioned boxes were upholstered in plush, some system of ventilation was introduced, our old members died off—partly, I think, as a protest against these new-fangled alterations. William and Tom invested their savings in a business, and, I am afraid, came to grief.

There was a society of friends which used to assemble every morning in the back-parlour at Stone's. Most of them were tailors from St. James's Street, and the others ('you can't expect 'em to be *all* tailors,' as the late Lord Hardwicke remarked to the sporting snip who complained that the Hunt was getting, from a social point of view, 'terribly mixed')—the others were tradespeople from the neighbourhood representing various industries. There was Mr. Thurston, the maker of indestructible braces, from two doors off, there was the

maker of pyjamas from round the corner, and the saddler from a few doors further still. The bond which united this little brotherhood was an interest in horse-racing, or, at all events, in speculation on that sport, and a genius for selecting winners. Whence they got their information I don't know, but it was from some wonderfully infallible source, for every Monday I used to see the 'sporting tailors,' as they were generically styled, sitting, rosy with success, round bottles of champagne, while poor little Geldenstern, the bookmaker, stood in the front-bar, pale from financial anaemia, sourly surveying them over a glass of gin-and-water. 'Pore me pays!' he once exclaimed to me peevishly, as an order for 'another magnum' was shouted forth in broad Scotch by a military-accoutrement maker.

One day the purple-faced Mr. McNab (of Pall Mall) accosted me. 'I beg your pardon, sirr,' he said, with a broad Glasgow dialect, 'but caan ye tell me onything aboot a maan caa'd Darrley? He's on the stage, I believe.'

'What do you want to know about him?' I asked.

'Well, he's been to ma place and ordered two or three suits of clothes, and I'm just wondering will I let him haave them. It's a maatter of aboot five-and-twenty poon.'

'I think if I were you,' I said, 'that I should ask

for a little bit down before you start cutting the cloth, say five or six pounds just to cover the actual cost of material and so on.'

I felt justified in suggesting this, as Mr. Darley was an undischarged bankrupt, and Darley was neither his real name nor the name he was in the habit of going bankrupt under. 'I'm very much obliged to ye, sir, for your advice,' replied Mr. McNab.

Some weeks afterwards little Mr. Geldenstern came up to me. 'I say, Mr. B.,' he asked, 'do you know anything about a man called Darley—some-thin' in the theatrical line, I fancy he is?' 'Why do you want to know?' I inquired. 'Well, it's this way: Mr. McNab, of course, is an old client of mine, worse luck! for I never knew such a marvel for findin' winners, and *he* introduced this Darley to me. Darley had ten pounds off of me the first week; then he found the winner of the Alexandra Plate, Bushey Park, and that week pore me 'ad to pay him over twenty sovereigns. The followin' week one or two of his little lot went down to the tune of fifteen pounds. That's a bit back, thinks I; but I've never seen the man since, and I can't get no answer to my letters.'

I believe when, later on, Mr. Geldenstern caught sight of Mr. Darley in faultless new clothes, and the whole truth dawned upon him, he went as near

assaulting Mr. McNab as one of the prudent old law ever goes.

The regular 'house of call,' however, for the members of the Haymarket Theatre was the Café de l'Europe, a few doors up the street. It has frequently changed hands—and names—but no one has yet succeeded in making a fortune there. The miscellaneous company that used to frequent it afforded me endless entertainment. There were respectable tradespeople from the neighbourhood, 'lumberers,' confidence-men, money-lenders' touts, journalists, and actors, and occasionally a Scotland Yard detective or two. I made friends with several of 'the boys,' as the flash gentlemen who live by their wits are called. One of them showed me one day a very ingenious contrivance. This was a teetotum with a movable stem. Such of my readers as are familiar with this amusing toy will, I hope, forgive me for explaining it for the benefit of the remainder. When you spin with one end, only a 1 or a 2 or a 3 will turn up, but by surreptitiously pushing the stem through, and so spinning on the other end, with the top the other way up, it will expose a 4 or a 5 or a 6. 'There was an American I got acquainted with at the "Piccadilly,"' my friend told me, 'who knew—well, he seemed to know as much as what *I* did. Racing, cards, he wouldn't be taken on at anything. One morning I

got up and I lay this 'ere teetotum in the gutter of the Haymarket just alongside of the curb. Presently I meets my Yankee friend. "'Mornin', Seth," says I. "How are you?" says he, and we start down towards the Two Chairmen for our first drink. All of a sudden I kicks up this bloomin' top. "Hullo!" says I, "'ere's some poor little kiddie been and dropped 'is top. Poor little beggar! he'll miss that, I dare say, as much as you or I'd miss a ten-pound note. I'm passionately fond of children," I says; "I've got five of my own." And we got yarning away about kids and that. Presently we gets to the bar. "What's yours?" says I. "No, no," says my Yank, "this is my shout." "Not a bit of it," says I. "I insist," says he. At last I says, "Let's spin and see whose turn it is with this kiddie's top." And we started spinning for drinks, and we got on to shillings, and dollars, and sovereigns, and before twelve o'clock I'd lifted just on two hundred pounds off of him.' And then, after a pause, 'And all down in that little bit of bar across the way there — the Two Chairmen they calls it.'

Another unfailing source of entertainment at the old Café de l'Europe was the little band of derelicts who would arrive in the morning one by one, each punctual to his self-appointed time, and sit there till night, ready to drink, lunch, or borrow.

I saw one of them, Mr. Meakins, only the other day. He has transferred his vicarious custom to another tavern. I believe the late landlord of the café objected to his raffling *objets d'art* at the luncheon buffet, and the artist left in a huff.

Meakins was at one time a prosperous owner of plantations and slaves, but somehow or other he is now 'reduced,' and sits on a bench in the corner of a bar-room waiting for something to turn up. He often remarks pathetically, partly, I suppose, as a reason for doing no work, 'I was a gentleman once.' He wilfully exaggerates the shabbiness of his clothes; indeed, when he wishes to appeal especially to your sentiments, he will don an old 'billycock' hat, which he has blacked with blacking like a boot. This harrowing coif signifies generally, 'Shillings and half-crowns would be of little use to me to-day; I need gold. It is a question of King's taxes, brokers, etc.' Meakins is the most discontented recipient of alms I ever met. I am sure that, if he had fallen among thieves and been assisted by the good Samaritan, he would have said afterwards, 'Oh yes, it was *kind* of him, of course, but I don't see that he could have done less. A man who can afford to pour about oil and wine like that *must* be pretty well off, you know. I think he *might* have made it fourpence, dash it all!' I remember some years ago—it was the afternoon before

Christmas Day—a big, burly, benevolent journalist called Jack Boom came into the tavern where Meakins was sitting, and heedlessly wished him the compliments of the season. ‘Oh, it’s all very well for *you* to talk about “merry Christmases,”’ snapped Meakins peevishly. ‘I dare say *you’ve* got a Christmas dinner to go home to to-morrow.’ Boom’s face softened. He crossed the road to the shop of a neighbouring poulterer, and returned presently with a large goose and a pound of sausages. ‘There, Meakins,’ he exclaimed heartily, ‘there’s a contribution, at all events, to your to-morrow’s banquet.’ ‘Now I don’t know how to get it home,’ grumbled Meakins. ‘We’ll take a cab,’ said Boom, and off they drove to the wilds of Maida Vale. A few days later Boom met Meakins wearing on his face a resigned, pathetic, but withal forgiving expression. ‘You were swindled over that goose,’ he said simply. ‘Toughest bird I ever put a knife into.’

One day I went into the Café de l’Europe and found Meakins waiting for me with an extra woebegone expression. He was wearing the Day-and-Martined hat. This time it was his gas, I think, that was in jeopardy. ‘No, my dear Meakins,’ I said firmly. ‘For one thing I can’t afford it. And, besides, I’m rather tired of helping you when you do nothing to help yourself. You never go out and

look for work. You sit here all day long consuming drinks that others pay for, and go home too fuddled to do any work, even if you had any to do. Appointments don't drop into people's laps through the ceiling of a public-house.' 'It's very easy to kick a man when he's down,' whined Meakins. 'It isn't a question of that,' I said. 'You asked me to help you. I refuse, and I'm giving you my reason for refusing. If you'll come to me and say, "Look here, I'm doing regular work"—I don't care how small the job may be, if it's only five shillings a week—I shall be happy to help you again in a small way. But I'm dashed if I'll do a thing more for you until you do something for yourself.' Meakins slunk dejectedly away, muttering something about 'advice being jolly cheap,' and I think expressing regret that he had ever allowed me to take him by the hand. A few days afterwards he came beaming into the café, a straw sailor-hat cocked rather defiantly on one side. 'Hullo, old chap!' he cried, 'thought I might find you here. I say, you did give it me hot the other day! Quite right, though, quite right! Perfectly true, every word you said. And I took it to heart, I assure you. And I'm glad I did, for I've settled down now to regular weekly work.' 'That's right,' said I. 'It's really a fine thing to have done, because after one's been doing nothing for a long spell——' 'Oh, I didn't find

much difficulty once I got my neck up to the collar,' replied Meakins cheerily. 'It's literary work—nothing very tremendous, but it *may* mean *big money!*' 'Capital!' I cried. 'Er—what will you have?' 'Thanks, I'll have a small Bass,' said the returned prodigal, and in another moment it was hissing down his throat. 'And what *is* this literary work?' I asked. 'Is it journalistic?' 'In a sense, yes,' he replied. 'The fact is, I've gone in for these Pearson's missing-word competitions. I got very near it this week. "Savoury" instead of "Savourless," you know.'

Poor Leekins had failed at a singular number of things considering that he was barely thirty. He had failed as a doctor, as an actor, as a journalist, and as a boarding-house proprietor. One day, early in March, I heard an extraordinary report close to me as I stood in the café. It was a combination of a bark, a shout, and a wail, and proceeded from my friend Leekins. 'Got a cough?' I asked. 'Cough!' he replied, in a hollow voice. 'I've got a cavity in the apex of my right lung the size of a hen's egg, a thickening of the base of the left, the whole of the pleura is congested, and I've had three haemorrhages in the last ten days.' 'Good heavens!' I exclaimed. 'But are you wise to be out in this east wind without an overcoat?' 'It's absolute madness, of course,' answered Leekins. 'But how am *I* to get a great-

coat?' I was wearing at the time a yellowish, greenish, brownish sort of ulster. I took this off and said to him : 'Here you are. I can only *lend* you this, because it's a coat I always take to Scotland. It's a particularly good colour for the hill. But you're welcome to it till the summer comes.' Leekins was profuse in his thanks. And the coat must have exercised an instantaneously beneficial effect, for that cough, like the cry of a lost soul, did not recur. The following August I was about to start for the Highlands when I bethought me of my ulster. I sought out Leekins. 'Would you mind letting me have that coat?' I said. Leekins pulled a long face, and pensively rubbed his chin. 'What's it in for?' I asked, after a pause. He looked relieved that I had grasped the situation. 'Only eighteen bob,' he said. 'Then there'll be the interest—a mere bagatelle. Let's see : six months—about two and threepence. Then, if you're in a hurry for it, there'll be my bus each way—twopence. Let me have twenty-five bob, and I'll bring it back at once.' And in an hour's time he returned me my coat with an air of conscious rectitude. The day after I came back from Scotland (it was a chilly day towards the end of September) I looked in at the café, where I saw my friend Leekins. He was about to greet me, when his features contracted spasmodically and, with a sudden jerk like the

movement of a railway-signal, his limbs went into extravagant angles, and he leant against the bar like a deserted marionette. ‘My dear fellow, what’s the matter?’ I exclaimed. ‘Sciatica, or what?’ ‘There *is*, undoubtedly, a certain amount of inflammation of the sciatic nerve, or, rather, of the *sheath* of the nerve,’ he managed to gasp out. ‘But the main trouble, I’m afraid, is tubercular disintegration of the coccyx, that sort of appendage to the sacrum, you know——’ ‘In fact,’ I interrupted, ‘you want the coat again?’ ‘Thanks, old chap, if you don’t mind,’ said Leekins. And immediately his muscles relaxed, and, with an easy shrug, he hoisted on my ulster. That was the last time I ever saw it.

Malkin is a far cheerier type of borrower than either of those I have described. He is by way of being a stage-manager, or what is nowadays called a ‘producer.’ One afternoon I asked him to dine with me at a cheap restaurant. ‘Well, it’s like this,’ he said. ‘How are you off for stuff? If you stand me a dinner, will you still be able to lend me five bob afterwards?’ ‘Oh, I think I can manage that,’ said I. ‘Capital!’ cried Malkin. ‘Come on, then.’

The other night he tacked himself on to a friend on the plea that he had lost his last omnibus or train or something, and the friend arranged a ‘shake-down’ for Malkin in his lodgings. After

breakfast, when his guest had gone, the host had the curiosity to ask the maid-of-all-work ‘whether Mr. Malkin had made her a present.’ ‘Oh yes, sir,’ replied the drudge, beaming. ‘He give me a present of sixpence—*and* his I.O.U. for two shillin’ he asked me to oblige him with.’

One morning a friend to whom he owed a trifle hailed him outside the theatre where he was employed. ‘Hallo!’ responded Malkin, ‘how are you? Come over the way and have a drink. But just wait one moment—I haven’t any “stuff.” Where’s one of our young patrician supers?’ At that moment a young exquisite fresh from Oxford, an aspirant to theatrical honours, hove in sight. ‘Now then, Mr. de Lacy,’ cried Malkin with some asperity, ‘have you got five shillings about you?’ ‘Yes, I fancy,’ stammered the youth, fumbling in his Poole-made pocket. ‘Here’s half a sovereign, if you’ve——’ ‘All right, that’ll do,’ snapped Malkin. Then, turning to his creditor, he invited him to the hostelry opposite. ‘You can come, too, if you like,’ he muttered grudgingly to Mr. de Lacy. ‘Three whiskies and a soda divided,’ he ordered, adding, as he tossed the half-sovereign into the air and caught it again, ‘Light come, light go.’

The flower-girls still lend a picturesqueness to the Haymarket neighbourhood, though I am sorry to

observe that they are beginning to abandon their marvellous picture-hats laden with ostrich feathers, and taking to sailor-hats—severely unadorned—which are unbecoming and out of character.

Polly (no one knows her patronymic) has been for the past ten or twelve years the most popular of the flower-sellers who ply their trade in the Hay-market neighbourhood. Time has changed her from a Greuze to a Rubens, but has not dimmed her bright blue eye, nor assailed her merry teeth, nor robbed her rosy face of its winning expression of radiant good-nature. There is not an insurance-agent, nor picture-dealer, nor actor who frequents the *Café de l’Europe* whose purse-strings do not fly open at the magic of Polly’s ‘Ave a flar, dee?’ Some six or eight years ago a domestic event robbed us of Polly’s presence for a while; but only for about ten days, when she reappeared as well and active as ever, beaming with all the pride of motherhood. ‘E’s a dear,’ she confided to us. ‘I’ve called ’im John. Nobody can’t help but admire ’im. I’ll bring ’im down ’ere one evenin’, just to show yer.’ And, sure enough, a very few months afterwards, towards midnight, she entered the *café* with her first-born, and set him on the counter that all might do him homage. He was dressed in a peacock-blue plush Mother Hubbard bonnet lined with fluted salmon-coloured silk, and

he had on a brand-new pair of enamelled patent-leather boots, coming half-way up the calf. A riff-raff court collected round the babe and echoed Polly's praises. John himself was exceedingly affable. He nestled (as fondly as his head-gear would permit) against the two smart barmaids who supported him in the rear ; he cooed at the grimaces of the kindly low comedian, made playful clutches at the beak of the benevolent money-lender, and toyed with the light finger of the racecourse tout. Everyone drank John's health ; but we learned a few weeks later that our toasting had been of no avail. Polly came in with an anxious face and told us he was down with bronchitis, that she had had to leave him at Charing Cross Hospital. ‘Oh, they are dears, the nurses there !’ she exclaimed. ‘They let me come in and see ’im almost any time. And they *do* love John. What d’ye think they arst me ? They arst me if I got ’im off of a Christmas-tree !’ and she gave a beam of joy as she recalled the good-natured nurses’ kindness. The poor baby’s life hung in the balance for two or three weeks—he got a little better one day, a little worse the next, and so on, until one morning, a few days before Christmas, the swing doors of the café flew back and Polly entered. ‘I’ve lost John !’ she cried, and then burst out weeping. One of the smart barmaids immediately dipped under her counter and came

forward and took the poor, shabby mother in her arms and made much of her. It was a very pretty sight. I presently prevailed on Polly to accept a trifling sum towards the funeral expenses and the purchase of 'a bit of black,' by which the humbler classes set so much store. Her gratitude knew no bounds. I met her a few days later, her picture-hat surmounted by an enormous butterfly bow of black crape. The only object she possessed of any value was a huge coloured silk neckerchief, what is called a 'kingsman,' which she wore about her shoulders. 'If I 'ad this washed and ironed,' she asked me, 'would you wear it?' 'Of course I would,' I answered. And in due course she presented me with a splendid Oriental wrap, the history of which goodness only knows, and I gave her an uninteresting new one in exchange. I prized her gift very highly, and I was very sorry when at last it was stolen from me.

The only other financial operation of any magnitude in which I was ever engaged with Polly was one autumn some years later when she wished to raise a loan to take herself, father, mother, brother, and Mary Anne (a baby whom Providence had sent to console her, poor thing! for the loss of John) on a hopping expedition. 'How much do you want?' I asked. 'Well, yer see, dear,' said Polly, with apologetic hesitancy, 'I want a good deal. There's

four of us, not countin' Mary Anne, and there's one or two noo things I should 'ave to buy. I'm afraid I can't do it all under ten shillin's. Yer know, *yer can't go 'oppin' any'ow.'* Evidently there are laws of fashion that prevail in Kentish fields as on the *plages* of Dieppe and Trouville.

CHAPTER IX

'Summer season' at the Haymarket—The meanness of the 'dead-head'—'House full'—Bold advertisement—Stage-door beggars—A pious crossing-sweeper—A distressed foreigner.

NOTHING is more difficult to gauge by the eye than the holding capacity of a theatre. I am able to speak with authority with regard to one, the Haymarket, as I once rented it for a summer season. At that time it held (I speak from experience) £12 a night. I understand, however, that Messrs. Maude and Harrison have made certain structural alterations, and that nowadays it holds considerably more than that modest amount. I believe that the summer of 1884 was the hottest we had had for twenty-two years. The 'Fisheries,' or whatever the particular exhibition in the far west of London chanced to be that year, did all the business. I had an excellent company and a very pleasant little programme. I was the pioneer of the revival of the triple bill, which afterwards had a prolonged vogue, but *not*, unfortunately, during my

six weeks of management. We began the evening with 'The Waterman,' with young Sims Reeves in his father's part of Tom Tug, Henry Kemble as Robin (with song), and charming Miss Julia Gwynne as Wilhelmina. This was followed by an old-fashioned two-act comedy, a version by Walter Pollock of 'Le Reveil du Lion,' which we called 'Evergreen,' in which I played the principal part—an old beau who danced, sang, played the violin, fenced, had most of the good things to say, and who seldom left the centre of the stage. I was ably assisted by clever Miss M. A. Victor, Harry Conway, and Miss Julia Gwynne, who made a most engaging *ingénue* in a white foulard Empire frock. I made the period 1810, and designed the costumes myself (my sketches were afterwards used for the dresses in 'Beau Austin'). We wound up the bill with one of the broad old farces, either 'Two in the Morning' or 'Twenty Minutes with a Tiger,' I forget which, with Kemble and me in the principal parts. All the press notices were most favourable, some of them enthusiastic, but the public stayed away. I permanently injured my hand-writing by the number of 'complimentary' passes I had to sign. Every night waxed hotter than the night before. I bought a few gross of Japanese fans from Liberty's, very pretty ones, with raised birds and flowers upon them. They cost nearly threepence each whole-

sale. I sprinkled these about the house for the comfort of my audience ; but it was enough to turn anyone into a cynic. I discovered that two or three people came in early with orders, collared five or six fans apiece, and left before the performance began !

‘What time shall I bring you the “second returns”?’ inquired my acting manager early in the run.

‘Just before my pathetic scene, if you please,’ I replied.

The regular box-office-keeper came to me very good-naturedly and told me he had had an offer to go immediately to Miss Mary Anderson ; that, as there was no booking for my entertainment, he felt he had better save me his salary. I thanked him and let him go, and promoted to his place an extraordinarily intelligent lad, a youth who in the Bancrofts’ time was one of the clerks. I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I used to look into his office in the morning, glancing at the outsides of my letters in the way I had seen Bancroft look at his.

‘And how’s the booking, Leverton?’ I would ask.

Without turning a hair he would gravely reply :

‘Well, sir, Bond Street’s looking rather healthier. There are two balconies booked for Thursday.’

I am happy to say that Mr. Leverton has retained ever since the position to which I by chance had the pleasure of promoting him, though the position itself has, of course, improved considerably.

One afternoon, when I was standing on the steps of the theatre, I saw a poor old friend of mine who was very hard up and very shabby, and who, besides that, had been a little bit touched in the head through a series of financial misfortunes. I very meanly turned on my heel and took refuge in the theatre to let him go past.

'I can't afford to help him, poor chap!' I reflected, 'and it would be no kindness to offer him seats for the theatre, for he lives a long way off.'

A few minutes later I blushed crimson with shame, for I found the poor old derelict had come to the pigeon-hole, planked down a sovereign, which might have kept him for a fortnight, and purchased two stalls for himself and his wife to come and see me act.

One night, when there was only £8 in the house, I told my people to put all the boards out. Accordingly the eye of the passer-by was arrested a few minutes later by these announcements: 'Stalls full.' 'Balcony full.' 'Gallery full.' 'House full.' 'Standing room only.' Within a quarter of an hour my receipts were exactly doubled. People inquired eagerly:

'Can we stand up at the back of the stalls ?'

'Certainly, if you wish,' replied the obliging Leverton ; and the enthusiastic playgoers paid their half-sovereigns and hurriedly made their way to the almost empty parterre. However, it was not a game one could play every night.

There was still a tendency, even as late as 1884, for a few malcontents to muster on a Haymarket first night and clamour for the missing pit, to the inconvenience of the rest of the audience. So on my first night I engaged a few fighting men to keep order. During the overture an individual in the front row of the gallery began to shuffle his feet, and to call out, 'Where's the pit?' He was picked up by his collar and the seat of his trousers and handed over the heads of his neighbours from one of my sturdy stewards to another, until at last he found himself at the top of the gallery staircase, where an East End light-weight, in an excess of zeal, struck him on the side of the head and knocked him downstairs. He wrote me a protest against my 'cowardly attempt to burke an expression of honest opinion.' I replied by acknowledging the receipt of his letter—'which was evidently written under some misapprehension.'

One afternoon a magnificent carriage and pair drove up to the stage-door, and a message was brought to me that I was wanted. I went out, and

found Gillie Farquhar in the Duke of Beaufort's carriage. He had called to ask me if I would play for his 'benefit,' which was shortly to take place at the Gaiety Theatre. I told him I would play for him, but that I should charge him for my services, as I didn't see why anyone who had been such a short time on the stage, and who had rich relatives, should have a 'benefit.' During this conversation I noticed two or three of the stage hands appeared to be closely admiring, as well they might, the beautiful japanning of His Grace's equipage, but I did not suspect how they were actually employed. All the workmen in the theatre used to carry variegated gummed labels about 10 inches in circumference bearing the legend 'Haymarket Theatre. Mr. Charles Brookfield's Summer Season—"Evergreen"—To-night!' which they would idly stick on to lamp-posts and palings and counters. When Gillie called out to the Duke's coachman, 'Twice round the park and then home!' and the splendid pair of horses bounded down Suffolk Street, I discovered that my faithful employés had covered the back of the carriage with these gaudy announcements. That night we had quite a distinguished audience.

The neighbourhood of the stage-door has always been the happy hunting-ground of the professional beggar. Sometimes he will assume the guise of a super or stage-hand out of work, but he is then apt

to break down under cross-examination. One very clever old swindler entirely took me in by pretending to have been a cabman who had driven me constantly in days gone by. He nearly, but not quite, marred the illusion by an extravagant though artistically-conceived touch, which was to address me as ‘Master Charles.’ Had I reflected, this might have been all right in a faithful old family coachman, but it was quite unaccountable in a professed cabman, who by his own showing had only known me since I was fully grown up. ‘You’ve forgotten me, Master Charles,’ he protested in a husky voice. ‘Yet many’s the time I’ve driven you and that good lady, your mother, in the old days.’ And a tear glittered in his eye. ‘Thurloe Place, number thirty, it was! You was one of my “regulars,” you was, Master Charles. ’Appy days those was. But I’ve fallen on terrible bad times just lately, Master Charles—got chucked off of my “showfull” and laid up six weeks in the ‘orspital. If you *could* let me ‘ave three ’alf-crowns to make up the price of a new license, Master Charles. . . .’

A very few weeks later a lady called in deep black and claimed to be the devoted old cabman’s widow, and produced a list of benefactors who were subscribing to set her up in a ‘little business.’ ‘Very suddenly he went off at the last, poor George!’ she remarked. ‘*Very* suddenly indeed!’

But her heart was not in her work. She was evidently bored with her own story, and glad to scuttle home to her 'late' husband with a shilling.

Another wretch used to call at the Criterion (when I was there in 1889) who had something hideous the matter with his leg; and by surreptitiously stamping his foot just before you came into the hall where he was, he could cause this leg to present such an appalling appearance that you cheerfully gave him all you possessed not to show you the other one.

One night I was called out to see a Mr. Williams, an ill-looking ruffian, who appealed offensively to every sense. He said he had just been discharged from Reading Infirmary, whence he had walked that day, and that he had still to walk on to Greenwich, where his wife lived, before he could lay him down to rest. And he heaved a sigh which I trusted might reach her, if she existed and really lived at Greenwich, warn her of his approach, and give her time to clear out from home before his arrival. 'But why do you come to me?' I asked. 'Who told you about me?' 'It was the party in the next bed to me at the infirmary advised me to apply to you, sir. 'E told me you 'ad a feelin' 'eart, sir. I couldn't tell you 'is name, sir, but them was 'is words, sir. "Go to Mr. Brookfield at the Criterion Theatre. 'E 'as got a feelin' 'eart, 'e 'as!"'

'I'm afraid I don't believe that,' I said. 'But I'll tell you what I *will* do. I'll give you two shillings if you'll tell me, truthfully, where all you blackguards meet together and advise one another where to go.' A look of sadness flashed across Mr. Williams' face, followed by a radiance of resignation. 'As trew as 'eaven's above, Mr. Brookfield, I'm tellin' you gawspel trewth. "Don't you be afraid to call on Mr. Brookfield," said the party in the next bed, "even if he speaks 'arshly to you at first," 'e said. "'E 'as a feelin' 'eart—an 'eart that can bleed fer another," 'e said. 'Well, I can't stop talking to you,' I said, turning to go. 'If you like to earn that two bob, here it is.' And I held up a florin. A gleam came into his eye for a second, and then his features fell. 'It's 'ard not to be trusted,' he sighed, 'especially after walkin' close on forty weary miles, footsore and tired, 'ungrateful and—and thirsty,' he had the effrontery to add. Then, as I disappeared down the corridor, he called after me. 'Mr. B.!' he cried. And I went back to him. 'Is that right about that two bob?' he asked earnestly. 'Certainly,' I said, 'if you tell me the truth.' 'Well, then, look 'ere, Mr. B.,' said Mr. Williams: 'I think if you was to look in at the Swan, in Fetter Lane, you'd see one or two familiar faces.' 'That's more like it,' said I. 'And who sent you here?' 'Well, Mr. B., it was this way,' said my friend,

with a leer : ‘ I was jolly well broke to the world, and I looked in at the good old Swan, and I see that there man with the sore leg—Pretty Dick we calls ’im—and I says, “ What cheer, Dickie ! D’yer know anything ? ” And ’e says, “ What’s wrong ? Down on yer luck ? ” “ Stony-broke,” I says. “ Well, then,” says Dick, “ you go down to the Criterion Theayter and try old Brookie. ’E’s always good for a couple o’ bob.” I thanked Mr. Williams cordially, gave him his two shillings, and told him to regard it as an annuity. He was very grateful. He called a little prematurely, and drew a further two shillings a few months later ; tried to repeat the operation a week afterwards, and failed ; and I have never seen him since. It is equally likely that he is dead or in gaol.

One day I was walking in the neighbourhood of St. Martin’s Church, when a crossing-sweeper, a ragged youth of about eighteen, attracted my attention in the usual manner by brushing little besomfuls of dust on to my boots. ‘ Spare us a copper, sir,’ he pleaded. ‘ Ave a feelin’ eart ! I ’aven’t tasted food this day, sir, as Gawd is my judge.’ ‘ Get out ! ’ said I brutally. ‘ I’ve a sick wife at ’ome,’ the fellow went on, ‘ an’ a little bibey pinin’ awigh. You’ll never miss it, kind gentleman—on’y a copper, to buy berread.’ Then, I am sorry to say, I lost patience with him and uttered an oath.

Upon which he snatched off his cap, raised his eyes, and, with the seraphic smile of a martyr, burst into prayer. ‘Ho Lord!’ he cried, ‘forgive ’im this hidle word. Thou ’oo in wrath rememberest mercy, pardon this pore sinner!’ I was so amused that I am afraid I gave the blasphemous scoundrel twopence.

One summer night, many years ago, when the Savile Club was still in Savile Row, my old friend Henry Kemble and I left its hospitable doors at about midnight, I bound for home, he for the Garrick. I think we had both been upon some country jaunt during the day, for we were both in ‘dittoes’ and ‘billycock’ hats. We had not gone many yards before we were accosted by a man dressed far better than we were in a good frock-coat and a top-hat. He was small of stature, and he spoke with a German accent. ‘I peg your pardon, gentlemen,’ he said; ‘I hef no right to accost you in this menner, but I em a foreigner. I hef lost my luckedge, I hef pin robbed of my purse, and until I can call to-morrow at my Empessy, I am absolutely without means. I hef to appeal to you as gentlemen, as men to men, to assist me in my emerchency and to lent me a sovereign.’ There was something so unconvincing in his tone and in his glibness that we hardened our hearts and refused to help him. ‘Really, gentlemen,’ he persisted, ‘I em sorry to pe

importunate, but I must ask you to regonseeder. If you will not assist me, I shell hef to walk apout the streets all night ; and tears began to course down his pale face and bury themselves in his scanty beard. The more he wept and pleaded, the more distinctly did he betray himself to be an impostor. ‘Upon my word !’ exclaimed Kemble presently, ‘if I could only see a policeman, I’d give this impudent blackguard in charge. Ah ! there’s one at the corner !’ But when we reached the constable, our petitioner who humbly begged had vanished. In a minute, however, he reappeared. ‘Gentlemen,’ he resumed, ‘I cannot believe that you are really so hard-hearted. Conseedar if you were yourselfs strented in a foreign city, without money, without friends, without luckedge.’ Another policeman hove in sight, and again our suitor disappeared. At Piccadilly Circus I bade good-night to my old friend, hailed a cab, and went home.

The following morning I received from him a most indignant letter. ‘What do you think happened just after you left me ?’ he said. ‘That infamous little scoundrel accosted me again in Long Acre. There was a policeman close by, so I exclaimed, “Now, my friend, I’m going to give you in charge.” Before I could say another word the German had slipped in front of me, and *actually had the audacity to complain to the policeman of ME !* He said I had

been begging of him, that he didn't wish to press the charge, but merely to be relieved of the annoyance. A crowd assembled in a second. I was utterly dumfounded at the creature's impudence, and before I could speak another well-dressed German came forward, who pretended to be a stranger to the first one, and said, pointing to *me*, if you please, "Oh yes, he's an old offender. He was begging from me this afternoon in the Tottenham Court Road." The constable, who was a shy young man, appeared overwhelmed by the evidence of the apparently independent witnesses, and gave me a push on the shoulder, and said, "Pass away, pass away; don't let me see you hanging about here again." The rest of the letter glowed with pardonable rage and resentment.

Some months afterwards—it was in January—I was hurrying down Charing Cross Road on my way to the Underground Railway Station. It was a bitterly cold night, there had been a sudden hard frost after a thaw, and the roads were coated with ice like a cake. Suddenly a familiar voice sounded at my elbow. 'I peg your pardon, sir,' I heard; 'I hef no right to accost you in this menner, but I em a foreigner; I hef lost my luckedge.' I looked round. I recognised the little ruffian who had annoyed Kemble and myself the previous summer. 'I hef pin robbed of my purse,

and until I can call at my Empessy,' he went on, 'I am absolutely without means.' I looked up and down the street. There was nobody about. He was a very small man but a very great nuisance. I hit him hard on the point of the jaw. He fell flat on the curb, and I took to my heels. It was not a heroic act, but it was a very comforting one.

CHAPTER X

Bohemian amenities—Mrs. Alfred Wigan and Mrs. Keeley—
‘Bottle on it!’—My earliest recollection of Beerbohm Tree—
An unchronicled conflagration at Her Majesty’s Opera-House
—One or two Bancroft stories—A conscientious ‘extra-lady’
—Harry Kemble and Arthur Cecil and the New Year—
Cecil as an equestrian.

No unprejudiced observer who enters Bohemian society can fail to be impressed by the spirit of *camaraderie* and good-fellowship, by the generous appreciation of a fellow-artist, by the mutual esteem and admiration, which prevails among actors and actresses, and which distinguishes their conversation when they talk of one another. Though I am bound in honesty to say that a very similar tone prevails in the intimate gossip of soldiers and soldiers’ wives, parsons and parsons’ wives, barristers and barristers’ wives, and even of bricklayers and bricklayers’ wives.

I remember once, many years ago (unfortunately for playgoers, both ladies have since gone to the realm where there are no critics), hearing Mrs.

Candour thus take up the cudgels on behalf of her friend, Mrs. Checkers. ‘ You know, I’ve heard all sorts of stories about Mrs. Checkers’ early life. I don’t believe *one* of them. I believe they’re all a pack of *malicious falsehoods*. And I’ll tell you why. Of course, in my life I’ve had to meet all kinds of women, including plenty who were—well, no better than they should be, as the saying goes. But in *every one* of them, however old and weather-beaten she might be, there was always *some* little trace of charm that you could identify and say, “ Ah ! that’s what the men used to admire. Now, there’s nothing of that sort about Mrs. Checkers.” ’

That delightful actress whom many of us remember in our youth, Mrs. Alfred Wigan, began life as a stilt-walker. When a child, with her little feet strapped to a couple of tall poles, she would stalk in and out of the coaches on the hill at Epsom, and rally and cajole small change out of the assembled sportsmen as they lunched. Or in the summer, in Mayfair, old dowagers taking tea at open drawing-room windows would be startled by the sudden appearance of a pathetic little figure, clad in tawdry muslin and spangles, tendering her scallop-shell across the balcony and pleading for coppers.

At the time that I knew the Wigans they were not only universally popular as comedians, but were

sought after in society, when society *was* society—that is to say, before it had been successfully raided by Financiers of the Old Law. Alfred and his wife were frequently honoured by a command from Her Majesty to bring their company to perform at Windsor. It is not to be wondered at that her social success rather turned the head of the gifted Leonora—that is to say, that she became a little apt to give herself airs among her brother and sister artists who had been less favoured.

One day, when she was directing the rehearsal of a modern comedy on the stage of the Olympic, some little question of manners arose, and Mrs. Keeley ventured to express an opinion at variance with Mrs. Wigan's. ‘Nonsense, my dear!’ exclaimed the manageress. ‘Such a thing would be unheard of! And I *think* I ought to know. You *must* admit, my dear, that I've seen a *little* more of the inside of a London drawing-room than *you* have.’ ‘I know you have, dear,’ replied Mrs. Keeley, without a moment's hesitation—‘*through the first-floor windows!*’

Mrs. Alfred Wigan once told me a story which illustrates very graphically the spirit in which the histrionic artist is apt to regard his creations. And which also shows that an author may know nothing of his brightest lines. It was when the Wigans were managing the Olympic Theatre in Wych

Street. The play was a melodrama, in which a shipwreck occurred, and there was a scene upon a desert island. One night Mrs. Wigan stood in the first entrance to watch this scene. The low-comedian, who represented a sailor, in due course appeared. He had the stage to himself, and advanced to what used to be generically termed a 'bank' (that is to say, an object rather like a coffin, covered with green baize, which, before the days of realism, did duty for a rustic bench, a rock, a bit of a ruin, or, in fact, for any kind of open-air seat). He then produced a black bottle from the side-pocket of his reefer-jacket, placed it upon the 'bank,' admired it for a moment in silence, then came down to the footlights and, smiting the side of his nose with his forefinger, exclaimed mysteriously : 'Bottle on it!' At which there was a shriek of delight from the audience and a deafening storm of applause. As soon as the act was over, Mrs. Wigan called the comedian to her. 'I wanted to ask you,' she said, 'about that line "Bottle on it!"'

'*Didn't* it go? My word! They're a splendid lot in front to-night—sympathetic! intelligent! quick!' said the stage castaway, glowing with triumph.

'But *why* do you say "Bottle on it"?' inquired the manageress.

'*Why do I say it?*' repeated the bewildered artist. ' Didn't you hear how they *roared* ?'

'But what does it *mean?*' she persisted.

"Bottle on it"? Oh, I don't know! It means — Well, at all events, it's *in my part.*" And he produced a dirty, curled-up copy of his rôle, and, turning over the well-thumbed pages, came at last to the desert island scene. 'There you are, Mrs. Wigan!' he exclaimed triumphantly, and he pointed to the passage. It was a stage direction : '(Jack Marlin advances to bank C, and places bottle on it.)' But the copyist had accidentally closed the bracket after the word 'places,' so that the words 'bottle on it' appeared as part of the text to be spoken. When Mrs. Wigan explained to the actor this obvious mistake, he almost had a fit. He raved, threatened, and implored, and became so hysterical that at last she gave in to him, and he was allowed to speak the utterly meaningless three words for the remainder of the run. There are still, in the present day, plenty of 'bottle-on-it' actors on the stage.

The first time I ever saw Tree was at Cambridge, probably in 1877. He had not been long on the stage, and he was staying at Trinity with a friend of mine called Pashley. Pashley was invited to dine with the Hibernian Club (I presume it was on March 17), and, on his explaining that he had someone staying with him, he was told to bring his guest to the dinner. It was a tremendous banquet

given in the Guildhall, and there were something like 200 guests. After various toasts, the president in due course proposed the health of 'The Guests,' and a distinguished old Irish peer on his right took a final glance at his notes and a final gulp of port, and dug his knuckles into the table so as to hoist himself into position to reply, when, at a remote end of the room, a slight, auburn-haired youth rose, pushed back his chair, and addressed the company.

'Mr. President and gentlemen,' he said, 'I thank you from my heart for the gracious way in which you have drunk my—our health. I will not inflict a long and tedious speech upon you, but I will give you a few imitations of popular actors. Mr. Irving : "Eah! daun't you hear—the sund of bell-ll-ll-ls ?"'

The elderly peer turned purple and barely escaped a fit of apoplexy. The president turned pale, hurriedly scribbled a note thanking Tree for his kind offer to entertain, but explaining that the prearranged toast-list must first be duly gone through, and despatched it down the table by a flying waiter.

But the young histrion, with a characteristic gesture, waved the menial aside, and proceeded.

'Mr. Macready as Melantius in "The Bridal"—'
I think two or three presidential notes were sent

begging him to stop, but all in vain. He went right through his repertoire, from Irving via Toole and Thorne to Edmund Keane as Oroonoko, and then sat down without turning a hair.

The Irish peer rose after him, and endeavoured to speak, but failed to utter a single intelligible word.

One summer's night in 1888 Comyns Carr and Tree and I had been dining together, and as we walked up the Haymarket soon after ten o'clock we noticed a very trifling conflagration on the terrace of the old Her Majesty's Opera-House. Someone had opened the theatre with a season of promenade concerts, and the balcony above the principal entrance was tastefully laid out with grottos and palms in pots, and illuminated with coloured lights, so that an imaginative Londoner could sit there and smoke, and fancy himself miles away—say at Rosherville Gardens. Somehow or other, a Chinese lantern had set alight to an eightpenny plant, to the great alarm of a sentimental couple who were sharing a glass of shandy-gaff close at hand. But a waiter soon extinguished the blaze by a few adroit flicks of his napkin. However, Comyns Carr decided that this was a matter to be inquired into, so we buttoned our overcoats up to our chins, with a vague idea of giving ourselves an official appearance, and walked up to the check-taker.

'We've called respecting that outbreak of fire on the terrace at 10.15,' said Carr to the man, in a confidential yet authoritative undertone. 'I presume you'll let us pass quietly, without obliging us to exercise our authority?'

'Otherwise ——' exclaimed Tree impetuously, clutching at some imaginary object in his inside breast-pocket.

'Sh-sh, mate!' said Carr. 'Gently does it! Give the chap a chance. He seems an orderly, well-conducted man.'

'I've nothing about him in my notes,' said I.

We had by this time telepathically cast ourselves —Carr as a kind of inspector, Tree as an utterly impossible Gaboriau detective, and myself as a sort of nondescript *mouchard*.

The check-taker turned rather pale.

'Are you from—the police?' he inquired, in a rather awestricken tone.

'From the Yard,' said Tree, in a metallic voice.

'If you'll kindly step this way,' said the man, 'I'll fetch the manager.'

'If you please,' said Carr. 'And it is my duty to inform you that anything you say will be taken down in writing, and altered and used against you at your trial.'

We were soon on the terrace, interrogating

couples and cross-examining waiters. Tree turned to me, and said in an audible aside :

‘Corky ! twice down the terrace and report !’

When I got back, the manager was begging that we would all come to his room and take a glass of wine, and Carr was taking impressions of the waiter’s thumbs in his pocket-book by means of a piece of burnt cork. There was tall rockery covered with ferns near where we stood. Tree now advanced to it, and pulled out a large jagged piece of rock, which proved to be a kind of corner-stone, for the whole structure fell in fragments on to the tessellated pavement.

‘Why, what’s that for ?’ inquired the astonished manager.

Tree nodded his head two or three times mysteriously, then slipped the stone into his side-pocket, and ejaculated in sepulchral tones, ‘Analysis !’

It was not until nine years later that he took the rest of the theatre.

I shall never forget the almost childish delight with which Tree used to watch the building and completing of the present Her Majesty’s Theatre. His enthusiasm would often impede the traffic of the Haymarket, for he would wander into the middle of the road and waylay passers-by to infect them with his fervour. Most people probably

know the story of how he one day caught Sir Squire Bancroft by the arm as he was wending his way to the London and Westminster Bank.

'Well, Bancroft,' cried Tree, waving his hand triumphantly towards the Charles Street side of his colossal new toy, 'and what d'you think of it ?'

The practical Bancroft surveyed the building for a few seconds through his glass, then turned to the excited young manager and observed :

'A lot of windows! They'll all want cleaning.'

I remember one first night at the Haymarket, under Tree's management, a very beautifully-staged classical piece was produced (the name of which I forget), which dazzled the eye and pleased the senses. But the dramatic critics were doubtful as to its merits as a play. The Bancrofts were in the stalls, and at the end of the second act, when the ordinary playgoer was smoking his cigarette outside, two or three of the wilier journalists conceived the ingenious idea of extracting an expert opinion from the soundest judge of a play in London. Accordingly, the most audacious of them—I think it was the late Willie Wilde—edged into the seat behind Bancroft, and boldly plunged *in medias res*.

'Well, Bancroft, and what's the verdict?' he inquired. His fellows crept up stealthily, like marauders on a battlefield. Each surreptitiously shot the shirt-cuff over his left hand, and nervously

clutched a stump of pencil in his right, in order to note down the words of wisdom which were to simplify his critical task. Bancroft slightly frowned as though in deep thought, turned his head a little on one side, scrutinized at a two-inch range the plush that covered the stall in front of him, then dropped his glass, leant back, and observed :

' It was in the December of 1880—what am I saying ?—of 1879—that I had these stalls covered —just about eleven years ago. They're as good as new. It shows the advantage of going to a really good firm.'

One night, when we were playing 'Diplomacy,' the first act had already begun, and I was dressed and made up as Baron Stein, when I was invited to speak to someone at the stage-door. In my hurry to attend to this summons, I caught my foot in a piece of worn-out matting, and fell down a steep flight of stairs, landing on my head. I was stunned for a moment, and the wooden staircase, enclosed by wooden walls, shook with the shock of my fall, and echoed forth a sound like that of a big gun. I was brought to in time to hobble on and play my scene, and after it was over I sought out Bancroft and apologized to him for the interruption my accident must have caused to the progress of the act. ' My dear fellow,' he exclaimed, ' I'm so glad it was nothing worse. When I heard that tremen-

dous crash, I was afraid—I was really afraid for a moment—that it was a piece of the scenery!' To anyone who did not know him this might sound a little unsympathetic. He only meant, of course, that he was afraid some heavy piece of the *décor* had fallen upon me.

Bancroft was very punctilious in matters of detail. When we were going to do Burnand's version of 'Lolotte' called 'A Lesson,' in which I played an elderly Scot, he came to me a few days before the production, and asked me, 'How old do you propose making Sir Thomas Duncan?' 'Oh, I don't know,' I said casually. 'I suppose about fifty-five.' Bancroft thought for a moment or two, and then suddenly suggested: 'Or—fifty-six?'

We had at one time in the Haymarket company an old lady whom adverse circumstances had turned into a time-server. She had a bad word for everyone but her employer for the moment. One night I came into the green-room and found her kneeling at the side of 'Mrs. B.' and stroking her hair. 'Oh, Mrs. Bancroft,' she said, in her rather mincing voice, 'why do you *ever* wear a wig when you have such *beautiful* hair of your own?' 'Well,' said Mrs. B., 'at all events there's plenty of it.' 'Oh, but the *quality* is so exquisite,' cooed the charmer, 'and the colour is perfectly *lovely*. So many of my friends have said how they envy you your marvellous

chevelure.' I was standing in front of the glass, and at this I took off my wig and ran my fingers through my own locks. '*My* hair has been very much admired,' I said. 'By whom, pray?' inquired the old lady, who disliked me. 'By my company when I was in management,' I replied.

It is almost pathetic to witness the extraordinary conscientiousness sometimes of those who have very minor parts to play. A delightful comedy actress—the most artistic on the stage to-day—told me that years ago, when she was playing in burlesque at the Strand, she once had to dress with a Miss Julie Walsingham (who has since blossomed into a manageress of Shakespearian provincial tours). This young lady used to arrive an hour and a half before her services were required. She had to impersonate a sailor, in white satin bell-mouthed trousers and a blue silk slop. But so determined was she to do her duty to the public and the management that every night she used first of all to get her dresser to whiten her from her forehead and neck down to her waist with *blanc de perle*; then, when she had made up and completed her toilet, she would drink a magnum of champagne to 'pull herself together'; then she would sit for the remainder of her time descanting upon the nerve-destroying nature of a theatrical career, debating whether the momentary triumph of a stage success

was worth the price the artist had to pay, in the sacrifice of nerve tissue, of peace of mind, of home life, of domestic pleasures.

'Pon my word, Lottie,' she would exclaim sometimes when in a cynical mood, 'if a good, honest, loving man with a thousand a year or so were to come along and ask me to be his wife, I'm not at *all* sure I shouldn't throw up art and the whole thing, and simply marry and go and hide myself away in the country, and just lead a simple, uneventful, happy life.'

'Oh, but wouldn't that be a pity!' her friend would say politely. 'Think of the public. What would *they* say?'

'The public! Pah!' Miss Walsingham would exclaim with contempt. 'Do *they* appreciate art? Not they. *They* only want your low comedians—a laugh at any price; *that's* all the public wants.'

And when this young lady finally appeared, all she had to do was to advance to the footlights in the course of a concerted number, hitch her white satin trousers, and carol forth, 'Dick Fid, Dick Fid, avast and belay!' and then resume her place. Which proves that the artistic temperament is not confined to star actors and actresses.

It was at about half-past eleven at night one thirty-first of December that it suddenly occurred to Henry Kemble and Arthur Cecil, as they sat over

their supper at the Garrick Club, that there were more spiritual ways of beginning a new year than in draining the wassail-bowl. Accordingly, they got into their wrap-rascals—Kemble into his well-known brown watchman's cape with the astrachan collar, and Cecil into his Baron Stein *pardessus* with the beaver facings—and they started to 'walk to a four-wheeler' which should take them to one of the fashionable churches where midnight services were held. But cabs were scarce, and they toddled all the way up Regent Street without seeing one that would take them. There was a hansom or two, but Arthur Cecil would sooner have mounted an Australian buckjumper than sit in a two-wheeled cab. It wanted but ten minutes of midnight. 'There's a church, Arthur,' exclaimed Kemble, pointing to the sacred edifice in Langham Place with the marling-spike steeple. 'It's nearly twelve o'clock; we'd better go in there.' 'H'm! But d'you know if there's a service goin' on there, Beetle?' asked Cecil doubtfully. 'I'm certain there is,' said Kemble; 'I saw two ladies go in just now. There's another one,' he added as a devout-looking lady, apparently foreign, entered the building. 'All right, then,' said Arthur; and the two friends crossed the road and went in. The church was dimly lighted, but they found their way into an unoccupied pew near the sanctuary. 'Isn't it curious—the

small percentage of men?' whispered Kemble. 'I don't believe I noticed *one*. How different from the Church of Rome!' However, they knelt side by side, and were soon plunged in their devotions, lamenting lost opportunities in the year that was dying and making golden resolutions for the year that was about to be born, when Kemble, who was nearest the aisle, was touched on the shoulder. 'Do you want to speak to me?' whispered a tall, grave-looking clergyman attired in a long cassock. 'Thank you very much,' replied Kemble in an undertone, 'but I—er—I don't know that I do—particularly.' 'Then, perhaps,' continued the clergyman, 'you and your friend would like to go before the service begins.' 'On the contrary,' said Kemble, 'we came expressly that we might have the benefit of the service.' 'The only thing is,' said the parson, evidently somewhat embarrassed, 'this is a special service for—er—er—for—er—for *fallen women*.' Kemble and Cecil leapt to their feet, seized their hats, and fled. I cannot but think they were mistaken when they told me they believed that as they hurried down the aisle, they heard a chastened titter from one or two of the poor penitents.

In his later days Arthur Cecil was wont to bestride the elaborate modern substitute for the old 'bumping-chair' of our ancestors—one of those machines, covered with a saddle, which go through

every kind of pace in obedience to a lever, and walk, trot, canter, or gallop without gaining ground. I have often gone into his bedroom in the Haymarket at about half-past eleven in the morning, and found him in his night-gown and a pair of pince-nez, with a resolute expression on his face, sitting well back in his pigskin seat, going through all the sensations of Mornington Cannon on Flying Fox. It is recorded that Arthur Cecil was once beguiled into riding a real pony. He was staying with some friends near Windsor, and one morning his host exclaimed : ‘Look here, Arthur, you *must* come for a ride. We’ll put you on old Sarah, the Shetland that all the children used to ride. She’s really *quieter* than an ordinary arm-chair.’ So Arthur allowed himself to be persuaded, and mounted the old pony, who walked very nimbly for her age, by the side of the host’s smart thorough-bred, through the streets of Windsor into the Old Park. ‘Now then, Arthur, what d’you say to a canter now we’ve got on to the turf?’ asked his friend. ‘Presently—I think it might be—rather pleasant,’ replied Arthur, with assumed jauntiness, ‘when I’ve got a little more—used to her—er—paces. Just then an academy of young ladies hove in sight, about ten of them, mounted on palfreys of various sorts and sizes, in charge of a riding-master. Old Sarah must have recognised, or thought she recognised, a

friend—some contemporary of Blink Bonny or Wild Dayrell—for she suddenly pricked up her ears, gave a snort through her grizzled nostrils, and started off at an eight-mile-an-hour canter in the direction of the manège. Cecil followed his first instinct, and seized the pommel of his saddle firmly with both hands. Sarah soon got alongside of the class of girls, who looked with merry astonishment on the stout, amiable, middle-aged gentleman with the curly silver hair who appeared so ill at ease on his tiny charger. Cecil felt it was his duty to make some remark which should at once proclaim that he wished to commit no breach of good manners, and also disguise the fact that he was no longer master of his steed. He had heard of the bonhomie which, in the hunting-field, levels all formal social barriers. So he hardened his heart, increased his left-hand grip on the saddle-bow, and got the right hand free. With this he contrived to raise his hat, and, with a blood-curdling attempt at a smile, he contrived to ejaculate : ‘Would you—young ladies—object to my pony—*joining your party?*’

CHAPTER XI

Maurice Barrymore—A conjugal reproof—Justice in the Far West—A bigamy trial in Pennsylvania—‘The Burglar and the Judge’—Stage burglars and real ones—Criminal ‘lines of business’—Card-sharping—An old American ‘sport’—The road to wealth—Millionaires at play—Mr. Lowenfeld.

ONE of the pleasantest companions I ever met in a theatre was Maurice Barrymore—now, I am afraid, no longer with us. He was a fine-looking fellow of a convivial disposition, and gifted with a very ready wit and an elegant choice of words. He was much sought after, and not averse to be found, and his popularity in all sorts of society robbed his first wife, a very bright American actress, of a good deal of his company. She was not only pretty and brilliant, but a very devout Catholic ; and, belonging to a practical race, she could on occasion select and hurl forth without hesitation the word best adapted to convey her meaning in compact form. It is related that one morning in New York she was leaving the house at about seven o'clock, in order to hear her daily Mass, when she met Maurice, in dishevelled

evening clothes, coming home from a supper-party. He had his latch-key in his hand, and was steering a course up the steps, determined to discover the keyhole or perish in the attempt. His wife clutched her prayer-book, and looked glassily over his head.

'Why, Georgie Anna!' he exclaimed, with the sentimental reproach of one who has been up all night, 'aren't you going to speak to your husband?'

'Oh, you go to h—!' she exclaimed, with an angry flash. '*I'm* going to Mass!' And off to Mass she went.

Barrymore once told me the story of a tragedy, and its sequel, which occurred some years ago in the Far West of America. He was travelling with 'Diplomacy,' and the company were all assembled on the platform of some little mining town waiting for the train. Suddenly there appeared to them a desperado of such ludicrously truculent aspect that he hardly seemed real, and the comedian of the company, he who played Baron Stein, a perfectly harmless, middle-aged man, burst out laughing at his demeanour. The ragged bully immediately drew forth his revolver, or gun, as it is called out there, and shot the actor dead. He was then over-powered and, at Barrymore's insistence, but *not* as a matter of course, thrown into prison.

A considerable time passed before the trial came

on. Determined that the murderer of his friend should not escape through lack of evidence, Barrymore handed over his part to the understudy, and travelled over a thousand miles in order to appear as a witness. Judge Nicholson, who tried the case, was a one-armed man, a big chap—over six feet in height, and well proportioned. In early life he had been so injured in some fracas that the left forearm had had to be amputated at the elbow.

The counsel for the prosecution submitted to the jury an overwhelming case against the prisoner. He was a notorious character, and had many a time escaped hanging only by the skin of his teeth. There were local witnesses of his recent cold-blooded crime, besides Barrymore, who gave a lurid and impressive description of the whole occurrence. There was absolutely no evidence for the defence ; but the jury, without leaving the box, returned a verdict of ‘Not Guilty.’ ‘Not Guilty !’ shouted Barrymore, leaping to his feet. ‘Why, I tell you I *saw* the scoundrel deliberately——’ But here he was dragged down into his seat, and induced to remain comparatively silent, while the judge congratulated the accused on his escape.

The court then rose and adjourned to a neighbouring bar, whither Barrymore strode over too, in righteous indignation. ‘A set of blackguards, the whole lot of ’em—from that evil-looking Judge

downwards!' he exclaimed to the crowd assembled. 'They must have been squared by somebody. I guess there wasn't a man in court who wouldn't sell his soul for a "whisky sour!"' Some of his hearers looked towards him with lack-lustre eyes, but nobody seemed offended. However, the prosecuting counsel edged over to his side, and said, 'Look at here, Mr. Barrymore. You'd better get 'way back to New York as soon as you can. They think nothing of killing anyone out here. Every single man on that jury is a murderer, and Judge Nicholson has killed five men just in the twelve years he's been here. Think of it! You see, being Sheriff, he's the only man in the town that's allowed to carry a gun on his belt. Of course, that gives him some more opportunity. There's a train going through about 5.15. I b'lieve you'd better try and get on board of it, if you don't want to get shot.' Calmed by a cocktail or two, Barrymore decided to take his new friend's advice, and he crossed to the hotel, packed his satchel, and hurried to the depot, just in time to see the hind-lights of the 5.15 disappearing in the distance. There was nothing to be done, then, but to return to the inn and dine, and await the train which should go through in about five hours' time.

It was lovely summer weather, and Barrymore and a few 'drummers' sat out after dinner in front

of the restaurant, enjoying the magnificent beauty of the night. It was only natural that he should get back to the subject that was filling his mind, and, with an audience of commercial travellers from all parts of America, he felt that he could hardly be accused even of indiscretion in declaiming against the corruption and venality of the particular State in which they were for the moment sojourning. ‘Of course, the arch-villain of the whole crowd is that maimed murderer Judge Nicholson !’ Barrymore was exclaiming loudly and impetuously, when suddenly across the brightly moonlit roadway there shot the shadow of a tall, broad-shouldered figure of a man, with the peculiarity that the greater part of the left arm appeared to be missing. The symmetry of form was destroyed by the stump on one side, which swung in rhythm to the walk. It was seen by all. The conversation stopped abruptly. The shadow lengthened, veered round, shortened, and the voice of Judge Nicholson was heard a minute later inquiring at the bureau in a languid drawl : ‘Mr. Barrymore stopping at this hotel ?’ No one moved for a few seconds. Then four or five ‘drummers’ rose from their seats, impelled by a premonition of trouble, and, bowing silently to Barrymore, slipped back into the hotel. All went but one, a diminutive traveller in dry-goods, who remained in his cane chair. ‘Anything I can do

for you ?' he asked in a whisper, which sounded partly professional, but mainly friendly. 'Have you got a gun?' murmured Barrymore anxiously. 'Not down here,' replied the commercial. 'Got one upstairs, in my grip-sack.' 'Thanks—that's no good,' replied the apparently doomed man. Just then came a reassuring reply from the hotel clerk, who had been glancing down the register. 'Barrymore?' he exclaimed. 'Barrymore left for New York City on the 5.15.' 'Sorry I missed him,' replied the Judge. And the incomplete shadow again shot across the road. Barrymore's heart gave a cheerful leap, and his new friend, interested until to-night only in hosiery, gave him a beaming glance of congratulation. But at this moment an officious nigger, who was engaged round the corner in proselytizing boots to his own complexion, suddenly looked up from his work and ejaculated, 'Mr. Barrymore? Why, he's sitting right there!' The Judge turned, surveyed Barrymore with a leisurely gaze, then advanced slowly to him. 'Pleased to meet you, sir,' he said. 'Clerk said you'd gone.' And he unbuttoned the pistol-case which hung on the front of his belt. Barrymore got ready to strike up the weapon as soon as it should appear, and to tackle his adversary. But the Judge proceeded: 'Thought p'raps you'd like to have the gun which killed your friend.' And he produced a battered six-shooter,

with the trigger filed off, and, handing over the grim relic, bade Barrymore a grave good-night and went his way.

Charles Coghill was one of the very best actors of our time. He was extremely accomplished, and a charming, fascinating companion, but absolutely destitute of any moral sense whatever, or any substitute for it. He seemed to have a cynical contempt for all the feelings and rights of others. Yet, when he died a year or so ago, I am sure he was mourned by everyone who knew him. He had a very handsome and delightful wife, whom I had the honour of meeting a few years ago when he and I were playing together. She was absolutely devoted to him, although I am afraid there were long periods during which he entirely ignored her existence.

I think it was in about 1885 that he was touring in America. His health was a good deal broken by the life he had led, for to every ordinary form of self-indulgence he added the habit of taking drugs and anaesthetics. Mrs. Coghill, faithful and devoted, as injured wives are apt to be, always kept more or less within hail of her errant husband, in case misfortune or illness should befall him and give her an opportunity of proving, for the thousandth time, her unaltered loyalty to him. During this tour, then, she was living in lodgings in New York City.

I think it was in Pittsburg that the shattered but still impressionable Charles met a girl, young, beautiful, and good, with whom he fell desperately in love. He called upon her father, stated his income (which for the time being was a large one), described the depth of his devotion, and asked for the girl's hand in marriage. The father agreed, saying he felt his daughter's happiness would be safer in the hands of a man of middle age than in the keeping of some lad who might not be sure of his own mind. And in a few days the happy pair were united by the Mayor.

A little while afterwards the fond parent was horrified to learn, from a friend who had lived more in the civilized world than he, that Coghill had been married for twelve or fourteen years, and that his wife—his real wife—was at that moment living in New York. Charles was immediately arrested on the charge of bigamy, and thrown into prison pending his trial. The most important witness for the prosecution was, of course, the woman who had been outraged and insulted for so many years—the faithful wife who, luckily for the cause of justice, was more or less close at hand. Mrs. Coghill was duly subpœnaed, and brought to Pittsburg. The lawyer felt he had an easy task with such a witness on his side. He may have quoted to himself the words of Cibber: 'We shall find no fiend in hell

can match the fury of a disappointed woman—scorned, slighted, dismissed without a parting pang.'

The momentous day arrived. The bigamist was placed in the dock with a janitor on either side. He had engaged no one to defend him, and stood sullenly prepared for conviction and sentence. His wife went into the witness-box. The prisoner exhibited no emotion whatever. He merely gazed abstractedly at the ceiling.

'What is your name?' asked the counsel.

'Katharine Anne Rivers,' replied the witness.

Even the cynical Charles could not restrain a slight start.

'That is to say, I presume,' suggested the lawyer, 'Katharine Anne Rivers—Coghill?'

'No,' said the lady firmly; 'Rivers is my surname.'

Her husband fixed his glass in his eye, and gazed at her.

'But—er—you are the wife, are you not, of the prisoner at the bar?' asked the bewildered advocate.

'No,' answered Mrs. Coghill. 'I lived with him for many years as his wife, but we were never married.' And there was no proof that the devoted woman was perjuring herself, for the possibility of her wishing to save her husband—especially in this desperate manner—had never so much as entered the head of

the matter-of-fact lawyer, and accordingly he had not taken the precaution of sending to England for a copy of the marriage certificate. There was, therefore, no evidence against Coghill, and he left the court with his faithful wife, who had sacrificed her good name to save him. For all I know to the contrary, this proof of devotion worked an entire change in his character, and he became a most solicitous and devoted husband. But for this I cannot vouch.

It is strange how little one can judge, even after years of experience, what will 'go' with an audience and what will not. I remember a piece which we produced at the Comedy Theatre, by a popular author and very strongly cast, which amused us all so much that we could hardly rehearse it. Hawtrey used every now and then to warn us : 'Now, don't speak too soon on that ; there's certain to be a big laugh, and we don't want them to miss the next line.' We rehearsed for six weeks. On the first night nothing went wrong—but the piece. There was not one laugh nor one round of applause from start to finish. But I remember—to Hawtrey's great credit—that, when the curtain fell, he turned to us and said : 'Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for working so admirably in such discouraging circumstances. However people may account for the failure of the play, they can't blame the acting.'

I have heard other managers on similar occasions address their company in very different terms from these. We took off the comedy in ten days, during which we rehearsed as a stop-gap a conventional three-act farce with no literary pretensions. I think it ran for a year.

When I wrote a little play called ‘The Burglar and the Judge,’ founded on a clever story by F. C. Philips, there was a line in the early part of it which I thought was certain to ‘go.’ A judge is asleep in his chair after dinner. When his servant wakes him, his lordship begins mechanically: ‘Well, gentlemen of the jury, it is for you to decide. If you believe the evidence for the prosecution, you will come to the conclusion that the prisoner at the bar——’ Whereupon the valet reassures him: ‘It’s all right, Sir Geoffrey; you’re at home in Grosvenor Place.’ ‘God bless my soul, so I am!’ says the Judge, looking around him. ‘I was so very comfortably asleep that I quite thought for the moment I was administering justice.’ It is not a particularly subtle piece of humour. On the contrary, it errs, perhaps, on the side of obviousness, which is in its favour for stage purposes. Again, it is levelled at authority, and jests at the expense of law and order are generally highly esteemed—witness, at Christmastide, the popular enthusiasm when the pantomime policeman falls on the butter-

slide. But, although the lines were admirably delivered in each case, not Cyril Maude nor Weedon Grossmith, nor Frederick Kaye, nor William Wyes, ever succeeded in causing them to raise a smile. Whereas, when the burglar appears a little later on, finds a piece of Camembert cheese in the buffet, and exclaims : ‘Lor’ ! it do ’um !’ the entire audience—gallery, balcony, stalls, and boxes,—used to shout with delight, as though Joseph Jefferson were delivering an epigram by Brinsley Sheridan.

The highest compliment I ever had paid me during my career, or, at all events, the compliment which gave me the greatest pleasure, I received with regard to that very part of the burglar. And, as I have now left the stage for good, I may perhaps be forgiven if I am so vain as to repeat it. I gave a couple of dress-circle seats to an old friend of mine, a professional thief who desired to take his wife to the play, and, in addition to a charming letter from her, I received unqualified praise from him. ‘My word, Mr. B.,’ he exclaimed, ‘you *must* have been a Tea-leaf in your time !’ ‘Tea-leaf’ being, as most of my readers are no doubt aware, the rhyming slang equivalent for ‘thief.’

I was obliged by the nature of the story to make the housebreaker in that little piece a ragged, starving youth, but, as a matter of fact, although a

man in such a plight might be driven by hunger and poverty to break into a house and steal in an amateur way, the professional burglar who has deliberately selected his calling, as another might select the Stock Exchange, is a very different class of man.

Whether or not there was ever an absolute prototype of the delightful evening-dress cracksman with whom Mr. E. S. Willard made us agreeably familiar a few years ago, the professional burglar of to-day is much nearer akin to the Spider than to Bill Sykes. To begin with, he must have access to money, for the requisites to modern burglary are expensive. In an ordinary job, where the object is jewels, the first step is to find out, generally through a servant, where the gems are kept. Then the lawn must be carefully pegged out with wires to trip up any unwary henchman who may venture on pursuit. A ladder in a neighbouring yard is requisitioned, and at a suitable moment, perhaps after dinner, while the family are indulging in the innocent excitement of table-tennis, the burglar enters the sacred bedroom of the lady of the house, prizes open the safe as though it were a penny money-box, secures his swag, then leaves *all his tools*, though they are valuable and brand-new, and makes off to where his dogcart awaits him. His next step is a singular one, namely, to deposit the

parcel—containing, perhaps, thousands of pounds' worth of pearls and diamonds—in, say, a disused drain, where he or an accomplice can find it presently when people are less likely to be on the alert.

The reason for these precautions is this: Supposing the victims of the robbery have discovered their loss, and communicated with the police, and an officer is waiting at the local railway-station, he will have no right to arrest Gentleman Jack if he finds that he has neither burglarious implements nor stolen property about him. It has most likely often happened that, when a distracted householder has been deplored the loss of his heirlooms, they have been still lying in a dry ditch within a few hundred yards of his despoiled mansion. Or the ragged old woman who has met him on the highroad and offered to sell him a pair of laces, and met with a snappish rebuff, may have had her shabby wallet laden with his wife's tiaras and stars and crescents.

It is curious—to an outsider—how thieves will stick to their own ‘line of business,’ as it were. The burglar would not dream of picking a pocket nor the forger of cheating at cards. Also an expert from Scotland Yard, when any dishonest work is submitted to him, can generally identify it at once as the work of a particular artist, just as a con-

noisseur in pictures can recognise a Reynolds or a Hoppner or a Rembrandt from a square inch of canvas.

Probably the most exacting criminal career is that of a high-class card-sharper. He must practise daily, like a great musician. First of all, arranging an apparently impregnable hand at the bottom of the pack, he will exercise himself in rapidly dealing five hands in such a way that the 'faked' hand shall fall to the imaginary victim. If you approach him on tiptoe while he is at his studies, you will find him throwing out the cards with lightning quickness, and perhaps muttering under his breath, 'One, two, three, four, and a slip ; one, two, three, four, and a slip,' the 'slip' signifying that the last card is to be dealt from the bottom. Then he will practise with the further complication of another 'faked' hand, apparently a poor one, but containing the odd trump which just makes the difference ; and he will deal five more hands, this time allotting the same tempting array to the chimerical 'mug' and the little assortment that will just beat it to himself or his assumed partner. But to be a 'sport' of this high calibre requires a special vocation. He has to be born, not made. For those who have the ambition but not the skill to manipulate the 'broads' to their profit, there are cards contrived, just as there are pianos with attachments for the use of the thumb-

fingered musician. These are prepared thus : The high cards are placed in a vice and their side edges sand-papered in the middle ; the smaller cards are submitted to the same process towards the ends ; the edges are then re-gilt and the packs replaced in their Government envelopes. When you cut these cards by their middles, you must obviously display a small one, and when you cut them by their extremities, you cannot help turning up a big one. It is as well to carry a duplicate *unsand*-papered pack with similar backs, in case the loser should ask for the cards as a memento. The game played is Blind Hooky, but so much money has been lost at this particular game that the name often causes alarm. This danger is averted, however, by the simple subterfuge of calling it something else.

‘ What shall we play ?’

‘ Oh, I don’t know. There’s rather a good game they used to play at the Embassy in Washington’ (this gives tone to the speaker) ‘ called Persian Monarchs.’

‘ I don’t know it.’

‘ Don’t you ? Well, it’s perfectly simple. You merely cut round to the other players in turn, and each one bets he’s got the highest card at the bottom.’

‘ Why, that’s just like Blind Hooky.’

‘ Yes, it is—awfully like Blind Hooky ; in fact, if

you can play Blind Hooky, you can play Persian Monarchs.' I see the same old game cropped up the other day as *Petits Paquets*.

A few years ago I met at Cowes an American 'sport' called 'Colonel' Troy. I believe he has since died. He was a man of about fifty, stout, with his sandy hair *en brosse* and a *moustache hérissée*. The only feature that gave him away was his eyes, which were small and furtive. He was a genial old party, but with that strong strain of self-pity which is conspicuous in all the habitual criminals I have met. They have no sense of right and wrong (though they generally have many other excellent qualities), but, in place of it, a perpetual feeling of grievance against the existing order of things. 'Colonel' Troy waxed quite pathetic over his own plight. 'You know, Mr. Brookfield,' he said, 'I'd give anything to have a small annuity—say about 2,000 dollars—just enough to live on in some little quiet watering-place. I hate late hours, and I hate cards! As it is, I make the acquaintance of some bright young fellow; he invites me down to his place and gives me the best of everything; and after dinner, when I'd like to go to bed like everything, I have to say to myself, "No; you've got to sit up and rob this young man. That's the return you're goin' to make for all his hospitality." Mr. Brookfield, it's a miser-

able life, and I hate it.' The obvious alternative, which he could not face, however, was giving it up.

In these days of self-made men—of millionaires who commenced life in humble circumstances—it is interesting to hear from their own lips to what trait in their characters or to what incident of boyhood they attribute their subsequent good fortune. There are evidently other methods than the old-fashioned one of picking up a pin and ostentatiously returning it to its owner.

I travelled to Brighton one day with Mr. Barkis, the wealthy contractor, with whom I was slightly acquainted. He was a shrewd-faced old man, white-haired, clean-shaven, and with quick, bright eyes. As he lounged on the cushion of the carriage with a huge cigar in the corner of his mouth, resting a Wellington boot on the edge of the window, his waistcoat unbuttoned to display three large diamond studs, he looked more like a prosperous miner than anything else. 'I dare say you're aware,' he said in the course of our conversation, 'that I began life as a turnpike boy. Well, of course, in those days I lived by thievin', just as I do now. The gov'nor got a bit suspicious, so he put another boy on to watch me. I tumbled at once to what he was up to ; so the first cart that comes through I takes the twopence and I gives it to the lad, and I says,

"That's for you." The next that comes through I takes the twopence and I puts it in my pocket, and I says, "That's for me"; and the third that comes through I takes the twopence and I puts it in the drawer, and I says, "That's for the gov'nor." So, you see, through bein' so jolly artful, the silly old cuckoo only got a third instead of 'arf.'

I commend this story to the careful consideration of some of those theatrical managements who employ four or five 'business representatives' to do the work of one acting-manager.

Talking of millionaires—which is, after all, but cold comfort in these hard times—I once went to a gorgeous midnight supper given at the Café Royal by the hospitable George Edwardes. The principal guest was Colonel North, the Nitrate King, who was on the eve of returning to South America. He arrived, nearly an hour late, with his secretary. They had come straight from a City dinner. There were several other industrial monarchs—Silver Kings and Diamond Kings, Railway Kings and Oil Kings; I think there was a Pork King, too. After a magnificent banquet, followed by music and singing (a special license had been procured), we got into private omnibuses which were in attendance, and all drove to one of the big hotels in Northumberland Avenue—I don't know why, but I presume Colonel North was staying there, and we

were loath to part with him. I was interested to watch millionaires at play. It was after 3 a.m., but their keen brains were still alert. They needed more relaxation before they could compose themselves to sleep. So they got hold of the night-porter, and for over half an hour they threw him sovereigns to take them one by one up to the top of the great hotel and down again in the lift. They were as eager as schoolboys. The porter must have made three or four years' income in about thirty-five minutes.

It was in 1893 that I first made acquaintance with Mr. Henry Lowenfeld. He had just taken the Prince of Wales's Theatre, and he engaged me for a variety of duties. He gave me an office, which I had to attend from 10.30 to 5, with an interval for luncheon. I was to read manuscript plays and give opinions upon them, tinker at pieces requiring alteration (in which, should they prove successful, I was to have an interest), coach the tenor in his acting, and occasionally assist with the advertisements. 'Now, how are we going to put all this in a contract?' asked my new employer, with just a trace of a foreign accent. I had been warned that I ought to be extraordinarily wary in my dealings with Mr. Lowenfeld, that he was extremely 'sharp' in business. But I said that, as far as I was concerned, I had much rather have no

contract at all, and trust entirely to him. His face lighted up, and he exclaimed, 'You won't lose anything by that, Mr. Brookfield,' and shook hands on it. I discovered afterwards that I had dealt with him in just the right way. He turned out not only a thoroughly fair and straightforward master, but a very generous one. On the other hand, I remember the case of a young lady who came to be engaged as a solo dancer. She came accompanied by her mother and by a solicitor, who drew up a long and complicated agreement, the main object of which was to insure against her being obliged to dance in the incidental dances with the rest of the *corps de ballet*. She consented, however, to dance in a *pas de quatre*, and this willingness was duly set forth in her indentures. A few days later she burst into Mr. Lowenfeld's office in great dudgeon.

'Mr. Lowenfeld,' she cried, 'I find you've arranged to push me on with all the rest of the ballet. Mr. Charles says I'm to come on and dance with fifteen others. Now, you can't make me do that; it's against the terms of my agreement.'

'Nonsense, my dear,' said her manager soothingly. 'Let's have a look at your contract. There you are: "The said party of the first part agrees, however, to dance with three other dancers—that is

to say, in a set of four." Well, now you're dancing in a set of four, and there are three other sets of four on the stage at the same time. You've nothing to complain of, my dear ; it's all budgeted for in your contract.'

Mr. Lowenfeld has been in almost every trade and business. When he came of age he was sent out into the world by his father with a hundred pounds in his pocket, as his brothers had been before him. He drifted to London, where he found himself about twenty years ago almost at the end of his capital. One day, as he was loitering along a street in the City, he noticed in a shop window a new kind of lamp worked by clockwork. Out of curiosity he went in and asked the price.

'Twenty-five shillings,' said the man.

'That's a big price,' said young Lowenfeld.

'It's the clockwork that makes them expensive,' the man explained. 'We can't get it made under nine shillings wholesale price.'

'Suppose I offer to supply you with the same article at a lower price, will you give me the contract?' asked the young Pole.

'With very great pleasure,' replied the dealer.

'Then kindly let me have the clockwork by itself at the wholesale rate,' said the youth, tendering nine shillings.

It was a pure speculation on his part, for he knew

nothing whatever about clocks or clockwork. But he went all over London the following day searching for a workman who could manufacture this contrivance of cog-wheels at a lower price. Twelve shillings, twelve-and-six, ten shillings, were the best tenders he could obtain. Then he sallied across to France, where he found the estimate even higher. At last, in Vienna, Lowenfeld pitched on a young mechanic who undertook to reproduce the mechanism at six and a half marks, and made a specimen. With this Lowenfeld returned to England and contracted to supply the lamp firm with clockwork at eight shillings.

'That's the first job I undertook,' he told me, 'and I cleared just over a thousand pounds by it.'

A few years ago, on his child's birthday, Mr. Lowenfeld looked in at a toy-maker's in Holborn to choose a present. He picked up a mechanical model steamboat.

'What's the price of that?' he inquired.

'Thirty shillings,' replied the man.

'Now, what a ridiculous price to charge!' said Lowenfeld, who has a genius for 'spotting' the value of things. 'That toy was made at Nuremberg. It probably cost you between five and six shillings. Don't you see that by selling it at, say, fifteen shillings you'd sell ten times as many and make a much bigger profit?'

'Well, sir,' said the shopman, 'you see, the toy season is an extraordinarily short one. It's only at Christmas time toy-dealers do any trade worth mentioning; therefore we're obliged to go in for big profits.'

'I'll tell you what to do,' said Lowenfeld, after thinking the matter over. 'Get a file of the *Times* for the last fifteen years; then every day write to all the mothers whose names and addresses appear in the Births column, saying, "Dear Madam,—We note that your son's—or daughter's—birthday occurs next week; we accordingly venture to enclose price-list."

The man carried out his idea, and wrote to him a year later saying the plan had worked admirably.

'But how terrible it would be,' I suggested, when Lowenfeld related this to me, 'if, as must often be the case, the poor woman had lost her baby!'

'What would dat matter to de toy-maker?' replied he, in simple surprise at my comment.

A young fellow-countryman was sent to Lowenfeld with a letter of introduction.

'What's your job?' inquired he. 'What can you do?'

'I don't know, sir,' replied the youth. 'I've had an ordinary sort of education. I don't know that I have any special bent.'

'Well, look here,' said Lowenfeld, 'you can have

this room for an office. Here's a Continental commercial directory. I'll supply you with stationery and stamps. You start at the beginning, and write to the various firms in that book, asking if they require a London agent, and if so to forward samples and particulars.'

The young man did as he was told, and the office began gradually to fill with specimens of various patents—agricultural implements, garments, medical instruments, drugs, collapsible boats, *delicatessen*, etc. Lowenfeld looked in every day and inspected what the post had brought, and promptly gave his verdict.

'No good.'

At last, when the youth had got well into the E's, and was wearying of his task, there arrived a kind of musical-box in which Lowenfeld saw money. His protégé obtained the agency, and is now the wealthy manager of a huge repository.

There was an enormous carpet, which Mr. Lowenfeld had picked up a bargain, which we used in the first act of 'Poor Jonathan.' He decided to have it cleaned, and sent for Mr. Jetley, who came on to the stage where the huge roll lay.

'What will you charge to clean this carpet and make it as good as new?' asked Mr. Lowenfeld, as he kicked back the bulk and exposed a yard or two of the border.

'Oh, it doesn't want much doing to it,' said Mr. Jetley; 'it's in pretty good condition. How big did you say it was? Well, we'll say a couple of sovereigns, and I'll let you have it back by the end of the week.'

'Right,' said Lowenfeld. 'Mr. Levilly, just draw up a contract.'

Next day Mr. Jetley arrived in a terrible state of mind.

'That carpet's in a terrible condition!' he exclaimed. 'The centre of it is covered with grease and dirt; indeed, it's all discoloured and stained except just the yard or two you showed me. Of course, *I* thought that was a fair sample. It will take me at least a fortnight to clean it, and I shall have to charge you eight or ten pounds, and even then I'd sooner someone else had the job.'

'Oh, get away, Mr. Jetley!' said Lowenfeld, beaming with delight. 'Go home and look at your contract. You've got to make that carpet as good as new by next Saturday for two pounds. Mr. Brookfield, kindly explain to Mr. Jetley the nature of commercial risk.'

The day before 'Poor Jonathan' was produced Mr. Lowenfeld saw me idle, so he called me to him and told me to go to my room and write a paragraph to send round to the evening papers.

'What about?' I asked.

'Oh, anything to draw attention to the production,' said he. 'Write something about the *carpet*, for instance.'

So I went upstairs, and wrote, as nearly as I can recollect, as follows :

'Playgoers who are interested in the minor romances of history should notice the Aubusson carpet used in the first act of "Poor Jonathan," to be produced to-morrow night at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. Originally designed for General Fleury's château at Compiègne, it attracted, while yet on the looms, the attention of the Empress Eugénie, and was by her desire transported to the Tuileries. At the sacking of that palace by the Communards in 1871, it was wrenched from the floor and presently sent to Vienna, where it was discovered by Mr. Lowenfeld, who immediately purchased it for the nominal sum of two hundred guineas. The costumes in the first act have been especially designed to harmonize with the delicate tints of this interesting relic of a fallen Empire.'

I remember the newspapers waxed very indignant over the paragraph.

'And has Art come to this?' they asked.

CHAPTER XII

Music-halls—The variety artist's coachman—The Great Vance—
An original prestidigitator—Mr. Samuel French and his
entertaining friends—Eric Lewis as a dog-fancier—Alfred
Cellier—The tale of a cheque.

MANY years ago, before promotion from the theatrical stage to that of the music-hall was recognised as an artistic upwards step, a friend of mine—an actor named George Powell—was prevailed upon by tempting terms to appear as a comic vocalist. He had to sing at three different halls, and he accordingly hired a fly from a proprietor used to the business, which should take him from one palace of varieties to the other. ‘I dare say you have an experienced driver,’ said Powell, ‘who knows where the stage-doors are, and how long it takes to get from one to the other and so on?’ ‘Lor’ bless you, yes!’ said the proprietor. ‘I’ve one been at it thirty-eight year. He’s driven Harry Clifton, Laburnham, Jolly Nash, the Great Vance—all the talent, in fact. He’s a careful driver and a steady chap you can rely on—what I call a regular gentle-

man's servant, if you understand me.' The following evening, punctual to his time, this treasure of a coachman drew up at George Powell's door in Theobald's Row, where he had rooms. He was a well-set-up man of about sixty, clean-shaven and rubicund, in a fairly well-fitting livery coat and a rather besoaped hat with a cockade, which caused a pleasant flutter in Powell's innermost heart, though the glow which this flattering badge kindled chilled a little when he had to hear himself give the direction : 'Drive to the Oxford, will you ? The—er—the stage-door.'

The driver saluted respectfully and drove off, and George Powell successfully performed his first turn. Immediately afterwards, he removed the bulk of his 'make-up,' threw on a big fur-lined coat—the official badge of his new calling—and returned to his carriage to be driven to the next hall. After a few minutes, the vehicle pulled up outside the Marquis of Granby. 'You've plenty of time,' observed the driver, craning round towards the offside window. 'Mr. Vance used gen'ally to paternize this 'ouse when he was workin' these turns.'

Powell felt rather dry and flat, so he availed himself of the suggestion, and was soon gulping down a tumbler of something with ice in it. 'Perhaps this old driver would like a drink, too,' thought Powell under the generous influence of refreshment;

and, looking out into the street, he called to his new servant, 'Would you—er—like something yourself?' The old man threw off the rug which covered his knees, and leapt nimbly from the box. And then Powell discovered for the first time why this treasure of a whip could only aspire to livery-stable work. His legs (which, by the way, were clad in shepherd's plaid trousers) were only about twelve inches long. The pigmy approached the bar with the gait of a dachshund. 'What will you have, coachman?' inquired Powell genially. The little fellow looked round with an angry flash in his eye. 'Look 'ere,' he said, 'not so much coachman—see! Doorin' this 'ere job, as long as you're in these 'ere shops, you're George and I'm Punch, understand.' And having enlightened Powell on this social point—which he could no doubt have established by precedents extending over years—Punch rounded off his period with the pacificatory remark, 'Mine's Irish—hot.'

I once had the pleasure of being presented to the Great Vance. It was in the Café de l'Europe, adjoining the Haymarket Theatre, just before my evening's work. I think it was Harry Conway who introduced me. 'Let me introduce Mr. Brookfield,' he said. '*What name?*' interrogated the great man, and it was repeated. 'Pleased to meet you' (a favourite formula in theatrical circles; I think it hails from America). We got on to the subject of

entertainments. ‘Ah,’ said Vance, ‘since poor old John Parry learnt the great secret, there’s only me and Dick Grain left!’ After a few minutes’ conversation, I explained that I must be off. ‘Where are you going?’ inquired the Giant Comique. ‘Only next door,’ I said, ‘to the Haymarket Theatre.’ ‘Well,’ he exclaimed cordially, ‘take my carriage; it’s doing nothing.’

One summer evening in the early seventies, a young fellow-officer of my brother’s in the 13th Hussars (it *may* have been Baden-Powell) strolled into one of the music-halls. In those days there was a chairman—generally with curly hair and a heavy moustache, and invariably decorated with diamond studs—who sat with his back to the orchestra conductor and presided over a table at which it was the ambition of every budding man about town to be invited to sit. The Lieutenant strolled into the stalls, which were sparsely filled, and was presently honoured by a beam from the *arbiter elegantiarum*, who pointed hospitably with his hammer to an empty chair on his right hand. The young officer accepted the invitation, took the proffered seat, and ordered a bottle of Moët and Chandon, the merits of which wine were being at that moment musically extolled on the tiny stage by a gentleman in a heavy fair moustache, a tow wig, and a long claret-coloured frock-coat. ‘Things

seem rather quiet,' commented the hussar. 'Oh, shockin', dear boy—shockin'!' replied the chairman in an affable undertone. 'But we expect to be a bit quiet in August. Let me see, I seem to know your face. In the profession?' 'I'm a conjurer,' answered the officer—'Professor Vesuvio. You may probably know my name.' 'Can't say I'm familiar with it,' said the other. 'Still, here's your good 'ealth, dear boy.' They chatted for some time, until at last the soldier suggested that, to give a fillip to the proceedings, he should be allowed to go on the stage and give his legerdemain entertainment. 'I won't give a long show,' he said, 'and I should like to see how it goes with a London audience. If they like it, we can talk business. All I shall require is a small table.'

The Master of the Revels communicated through his speaking-tube with the stage-manager, and presently all was arranged. The chairman rapped on the table, exclaiming in stentorian tones, 'Signor Vesuvio, the Wizard of the World, will next appear,' started the applause, and the young officer advanced to the footlights. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' he said, 'I propose to submit to your kind attention an exhibition of prestidigitation upon an entirely new principle. I guarantee that no one in this hall has ever seen an illusion performed in the manner in which I am now going to perform this one. I will

use nothing but articles borrowed from the audience. Will any gentleman kindly lend me a silk hat?' An old man in the stalls who was listening with rapt attention immediately handed up his topper. 'Now I want a good sharp pocket-knife. No, that's not large enough. Thank you, sir; that will do nicely. Now, can anyone oblige me with a large bandanna? or a lady's light shawl would answer my purpose. Thank you, madam.' He then proceeded to cut the upper part of the hat entirely away from the brim. 'Now, you observe, ladies and gentlemen, there's no deception, no mirrors or apparatus. I don't think there is anyone in the hall prepared to affirm that I have not cut the brim entirely off this gentleman's hat. Now we'll see whether we can repair it or whether we can't;' and he placed the remains of the hat and the pocket-knife on the little table which stood at hand, and covered them over with the borrowed shawl. 'Now will some gentleman with a watch kindly time me?' he inquired, and a young man produced his timepiece and volunteered. 'I shall leave the stage for a time, and in two minutes precisely by this gentleman's watch—well, you shall see what you shall see.' The orchestra struck up the strains of the 'Beautiful Blue Danube' waltz; the gallant entertainer stepped lightly to the stage-door, hailed a hansom, and drove off to supper.

Mr. Samuel French, who acquired the business of Lacy, the theatrical publisher in the Strand, conceived a singular idea for cheering his declining years. He assembled together half a dozen friends, younger men than himself, all endowed with various powers of entertaining. He reminded them that he was a wealthy man, that his son was well provided for, and that he was minded to divide the bulk of his property among this selected few, if they on their side were willing to devote some of their time to him. His conditions seemed not unreasonable. He merely desired that they should dine with him every Sunday evening, and after dinner amuse him by the exhibition of their various accomplishments. One was to recite, another to play the piano, another to sing, another to give his clever farmyard imitations, and so forth.

'The only stipulation I make,' said Mr. Samuel French, 'is that if you elect to go in for this arrangement you undertake to go through with it. If you think it's going to bore you to dine with me Sunday after Sunday, why, just say so right away, and we're as we were. I shan't be offended.' There was a unanimous outcry and protest. 'Oh, Mr. French! Bored! What next!' exclaimed one. 'My dear Sam, quite apart from the question of any little remembrance in the future, there's nothing I should enjoy so much as a little weekly *réunion!*' cried

another. In fact, they all agreed to the scheme with alacrity, and each went home walking on air and dreamt that he possessed a yacht, a deer-forest, and a four-in-hand.

The first Sunday's banquet was a great success. The dinner was excellent, and the wines generous and plentiful, and guest vied with guest as to which should most amuse the kindly old host. The comic vocalist sang George Grossmith's 'You should see me dance the polka' with much of the original composer's vivacity, and with innumerable grimaces of his own thrown in ; the pianist played his 'Carmen Fantasia' with brilliancy and precision ; and the comedian (a middle-aged man inclined to embon-point) laid an imaginary egg on the sofa, then ran round the room cackling a maternal pæan, and finally stood on the sofa and flapped the sides of his evening coat, and crowed himself purple in the face. Mr. Samuel French was delighted. He ceremoniously thanked each guest as he shook him by the hand, adding the reminder, 'Next Sunday, then, at seven o'clock. Don't forget.'

The following week's entertainment seemed a little less piquant. There was a *réchauffé* flavour about it, perhaps, which made it suffer by comparison with the inaugural show. However, the host was as cordial as ever, and when it was over he thanked them as heartily for their kind efforts, and wished

them *au revoir* till next week. And each artist consoled himself with the reflection that 'one is bound to vary a bit,' that 'the second performance always goes a bit flat,' and 'at all events the old man seemed pleased, and that, after all, is the main thing.'

The third Sunday the singer dashed boldly into the Judge's song from 'Trial by Jury,' at which he had been working hard all the week. 'Hullo!' exclaimed Mr. Samuel French, 'what's this? What about the polka?' 'I thought,' stammered the vocalist, 'you might like a change.' 'No, no, no, thank you!' said his host; 'the rollicking polka's good enough for me. When I want a change I'll tell you.' So the tale of the 'impecunious party' was abruptly abandoned, and the mortified buffo had again to feign enthusiasm for the old-fashioned polka. The pianist, who had prepared a novelty in the shape of selections from 'La Cavalleria Rusticana,' very wisely let his roll of new music lie in the hall, and contented himself with a repetition of the popular 'Carmen Fantasia.' The mimic, however, commenced a serious recitation. He had chosen a stirring passage from the 'Rubáiyát' of Omar Khayyám.

'Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
About it and about—but ever more
Came out by the same door as in I went.
With them the seed of learning did I sow——'

'Hullo! hullo! what's all this?' inquired Mr. Samuel French.

'It's from the "Rubáiyat" of Omar Khayyám, the great Persian philosopher,' said the comedian proudly, thinking to himself, '*I'll* show him I'm not a mere clown.' 'It's a really fine thing.' And he proceeded :

'With them the seed of learning did I sow,
And with my own hand wrought to make it grow.
And *this* was all the harvest that I reapt—
I came like water, and like——'

'No, no!' interrupted the host, 'never mind about the Rahat Lakoum; I want the old hen. Come on, George! lay the egg!'

There was no help for it. George had to roll up his handkerchief and hide it on the sofa, and commence his 'Brt-bt-bt-bt-bt!' finishing with the leap on to the quaking sofa and the hoarse 'Cock-a-doodle-do!' with the head thrown back. But he was too angry to be able to succeed in bringing the true scent of the farmyard into the drawing-room. His clucking had an indignant ring in it, which suggested less the cachinnation of a contented Cochin than the wail of an aggrieved Spanish mother.

When he was leaving with the others, and his host added the usual reminder to his farewell, the layer-of-eggs-*malgré-lui* said boldly, 'No, Mr.

French, next Sunday I'm afraid I shall *not* be able to give myself the pleasure of dining with you.' The old man's face slightly clouded over. 'Why not, pray?' he inquired gravely. 'Because—er—I shan't be in town. I shall be staying with some friends in the country,' said the comedian defiantly. 'I am afraid,' said Mr. Samuel French firmly, 'you will have to disappoint your friends in the country. You must tell them you were previously engaged to me. That was the understanding, you know.' The other bowed his head. There was no escape. He and his fellows had sold themselves, on credit, to the American publisher—for Sundays, at all events—for the term of his natural life.

For the greater part of a year these half-dozen men, once 'jolly companions every one,' stuck loyally to their bargain. But melancholy commenced to furrow their cheeks, their eyes lost their lustre, their bodies became emaciated, their bright accomplishments became tedious infirmities. Their genial old host seemed to perceive no difference in them, however. As they grew paler, sadder, and older every week, he seemed to grow rosier, merrier, and younger.

Only one apostatized. I think it was the once comic singer. He gave no word of warning—simply vanished from the country. His name was never afterwards mentioned at the Sunday banquets,

and the five who remained, cemented together by a common *auri sacra fames*, rejoiced in the thought that each would get an extra one-thirtieth of Mr. Samuel French's fortune when the time should arrive for him to go 'where all good publishers go.'

One Sunday night, after the usual excellent dinner and subsequent solemnities, Mr. Samuel French, who was in exceptionally high spirits, remarked, as he bade his guests good-night: 'I am sorry to say, my good friends, that next Sunday I shan't have the pleasure of receiving you. I shall be the loser. Next Sunday's a *holiday* for you.' 'Oh, Mr. French,' they exclaimed, though their hearts bounded at the prospect of a real day of rest, 'don't put it like that! We shall very much miss your kind hospitality, I'm sure.' 'I'm glad you feel it that way,' replied their host, beaming with good-humour. 'Sunday *week*, then?' inquired one. 'You'll hear from me,' was the reply. 'Good-night.' They walked along, debating what was to be done on this forthcoming holiday. And such is the force of habit that, when the day came round, it ended in their all dining together at Pagani's in a private room with a piano, at which the pianist sat himself after dinner and mechanically played the 'Carmen Fantasia,' and the others followed suit with their various tricks, like so many wound-up toys, concluding with the mimic, who laid a newer

egg than he had laid for months, and cackled over it as enthusiastically as though it had been his first-born.

In the course of the week each received a card printed in silver, with a lady's maiden name in the corner crossed with an arrow, announcing the re-marriage of Mr. Samuel French. And not very long after the old man died. But not one of the sprightly entertainers received a legacy, large or small. Whether matrimony altered Mr. Samuel French's views, or the scheme from the first had been a sardonic practical joke on the old man's part, no one will ever know. I believe the comedian has entirely given up laying.

Eric Lewis and his kind old father once answered an advertisement of a 'Dachshund. Pedigree dog. What offers?' and obtained for a small sum about a yard of dog, of which they became inordinately proud. Eric, I remember, blossomed into rather doggy clothes—coloured waistcoats, and a scarf-pin representing a scudding hare. He also commenced to take in the *Field* and prated of the K.C.S.B. All Royal Avenue were at the diverging feet of Buster, as the dog was called, and all the neighbouring Chelsea tradesmen paid him homage. He was much praised by the baker, who did a brisk trade in Spratt's biscuits; by the milkman, who assured Eric 'they want a lot of milk just while they're

shaping'; by the greengrocer, who represented that 'living in town, where they can't find the herbs they need, you should give 'em plenty of green meat,' and foisted an extra daily cabbage on to the dog-fanciers; and by the butcher, who declared there was 'nothing so good for strengthenin' a young dog's teeth as a sirloin bone.' At last Eric chanced to meet a man who had bred many kinds of dogs, and obtained prizes all over the country. His first instinct was to brag about Buster, but more modest principles prevailed, and he decided the dog should exhibit his own merits, and conquer this canine authority as he had conquered Chelsea, by the length of his body and ears and the faultless bandiness of his fore-legs. Accordingly, Eric invited the breeder to come and dine.

'Look here, father,' he said, as they were awaiting their guest, 'we won't say a word about Buster. We'll tell William to let him in after the pudding, and we'll just watch our guest's face when he catches sight of him. I *wonder* what he'll say.'

'I don't feel inclined to *part* with Buster,' said the old man, 'whatever your friend may offer for him.'

'No, no, of *course* not!' said Eric. 'Besides, I don't fancy he's really a very rich man.'

Just then the guest was announced. The dinner was bountiful and excellent, but conversation

flagged, for both hosts were looking forward to the effect which should presently be produced by their *coup de théâtre*. At last, as the final spoonfuls of *baba au rhum* were disappearing, the door opened by some invisible means, and in waddled Buster, the conquering hero. For some time the authority on dogs took no notice of him. At last he fixed his glass in his eye, and, after staring for a moment at the pampered favourite, he inquired doubtfully: 'Isn't there a bit of the *Dach* about that dog?'

'I wonder if anyone can change me a cheque for £2?' asked the gentle, humorous, lovable composer Alfred Cellier one night, as he entered the supper-room of the Cormorant Club. 'It's a most extraordinary thing, but the hall-porter tells me he's not allowed to cash cheques for members.' (This was a new rule, which the committee had been compelled to make, owing to the faulty financial methods of many of the light-hearted young Cormorants.) 'Dorothy,' Cellier's most successful light opera, was in the height of its success at this time. He was enjoying a spell of tremendous prosperity, and it was accordingly the poverty, and not the will of the smartly-dressed bucks assembled which prevented them from obliging the popular musician. Not one of them, as it happened, could muster more than a sovereign, when suddenly a swarthy, unkempt Irish journalist, in untidy day clothes, Barry

Lyndon, the most notorious cadger in the club, exclaimed from his corner, ‘I think I can manage it for you, Alfred, my dear boy, if you’ll come over here.’ Everyone was amazed—first, that Barry should be in possession of £2; and, secondly, that he should have the effrontery to proclaim it in a club where he owed money to everyone, including the servants. But Alfred Cellier was still more astounded when he crossed to where Barry Lyndon was sitting, and saw him produce a pocket-book containing a big bunch of bank-notes. ‘Look here,’ said Barry: ‘I haven’t anything so small as gold. But you’d better write a cheque for more than two, hadn’t you? Nothing annoys a bank so much as having to cash a lot of little footling cheques for ones and twos and threes. Wouldn’t you like a note for twenty?’ And he proffered a Bank of England £20 note. ‘No, no! thanks very much,’ said the modest Alfred. ‘I really only want £2. I’ve got a cab outside that I’ve had all day—I suppose he’ll want about a sovereign; and then I shall want a little supper and a cab home: £2 will be ample.’ ‘Well, I’ve nothing less than a note for ten,’ said Barry, ‘and I daren’t trust myself with loose gold,’ he added, with a leer. ‘It only leads one into mischief. So write your cheque for ten, if you won’t have more.’ And he threw a £10 note

on to the table. Alfred wrote his cheque, which he handed with profuse thanks to the journalist, rang the bell, cashed the note, sent out £1 to the cabman, and settled himself down to a grill and a pint of wine. Barry sat patiently on, as the club emptied itself, and towards four o'clock he and the composer were left alone—Cellier was always a late bird. ‘Alfred, my dear boy,’ said the Irishman, drawing his chair round to the fire where his friend was sitting, ‘I’m in the devil of a hole, and I want you to get me out of it. I’m so infernally hard up, I don’t know which way to turn. I don’t want to bore you with all my worries, but I haven’t even the price of a cab home, or of a whisky-and-soda. But, worse than that, I’ve got to find by to-morrow morning—that’s to say, by eleven o’clock *this* morning—’ ‘But I thought,’ interrupted Cellier—‘I fancied—I was delighted to notice, that’s to say—that you’d got a pocket cram full of money.’ ‘So I have—but not a penny of it’s mine. It’s all my dear old mother’s. I had to go into the City to-day to draw her dividends. She’s been a great deal kinder to me already than she can afford. I *daren’t* tell her of my troubles, for I know she’d give me the money at once, and I mustn’t let her, poor old soul! I’m sure you’ll appreciate my feeling in the matter. Of course, your cheque’s just as good as a Bank of England note. I’ll pay the lot into her

account to-morrow. But I mustn't let her know of my troubles. So I thought that perhaps you'd let me have £8 for a week or two, like the good-natured chap that you are. You said you only wanted two, you know——'

And Alfred Cellier immediately bade a permanent farewell to eight hard-earned sovereigns, like the tender-hearted lamb that he was.

CHAPTER XIII

A 'Customers' Protection Society'—Charing Cross Hospital—An operation—An unwarrantable intrusion at Westminster Hospital—A lady who changed her doctor—Firemen and their ways—How to make out a fire assurance inventory—Fires in theatres.

It was in sheer idleness and with no ulterior object that I chanced one morning to count the contents of one of the boxes of cigarettes which I used daily to buy at Messrs. Myburg and Piper's, and found that it contained only twenty-four instead of twenty-five.

But the discovery came back to my mind a long time afterwards when I received a letter from the Mutual Communication Society for the Protection of Trade, conjuring me to pay Messrs. Myburg and Piper's account. It occurred to me that just as the Chinaman who paints an ugly face on his shield to frighten his enemy must be himself timid of such bogies, so the poor tradesman whose untutored mind thinks to alarm by flourishing the name of a debt-collecting 'society' would possibly be terrified

by similar means. Accordingly, I immediately had some notepaper printed with the heading :

MUTUAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY FOR THE
PROTECTION OF CUSTOMERS,
1, THE CLOISTERS, TEMPLE,
LONDON, E.C.

....., 18.....

Secretary : GEORGE WASHINGTON, Esq.

I also had the name painted over the door at the address mentioned, which was that of a friend, and upon a sheet of his official paper, 'George Washington (per C.B.),' wrote to the other secretary, saying that I would pay Messrs. Myburg and Piper's account at my own convenience ; that this was without prejudice ; that, should their clients elect to take proceedings in the meanwhile, a counter-action would be brought to recover £5, being the value of 1,000 cigarettes, which I considered I had paid for and not received, owing to Messrs. Myburg and Piper's custom of selling as quarter-hundred boxes boxes containing only twenty-four cigarettes. The following day I received a humble apology from the firm, who never molested me again.

Another time I had paid a small account—five or six shillings only—to a druggist, a Mr. Fryer (who offered me a receipt which I refused, saying I should only lose it) ; but, notwithstanding this, I presently received from the Trade Protection Society an

application for payment. George Washington immediately wrote back, saying :

‘FRYER’S ACCOUNT.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘We have paid Fryer’s account, and hold the receipt.’

Then came a polite request that we should show the receipt we held. To which George replied :

‘FRYER’S ACCOUNT.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘We are sorry to have to refuse to show your client’s receipted bill, except in the County Court, for the following reasons : (i.) To show the importance of keeping receipts; (ii.) to show the carelessness of West-End tradesmen ; and (iii.) to show the fallibility of Societies for the Protection of Trade.’

That ended the correspondence.

The Society for the Protection of Customers was of considerable service to me for a long time. It ceased abruptly to exist, owing to an unpardonable practical joke played upon me by one Harry Morrell. I was dining with him in Edinburgh, and he introduced me to his brother-in-law—a Mr. McKenna, I think, was the name—a most agreeable man. My host made me tell him all about ‘George Washington’ and the ‘society,’ to which he

listened with apparently amused attention. When I had finished, Morrell said : ‘And now it’s only fair to tell you who McKenna is. He’s Stubbs, the editor of *Stubbs’s List*.’ My Chinaman’s shield was shattered in an instant.

It was about fifteen years ago that my friend the late Edward Bellamy advised me to submit to his knife. He arranged for me to be taken in at Charing Cross Hospital, in a ward (presented, I believe, by one of the Rothschilds) which had not yet been officially opened, so that I had a room to myself. He told me I need not go in till ten o’clock the night before the operation ; so until nine-fifty I sat jovially in a neighbouring club. Two or three boon companions walked with me to the door of the hospital, where we parted in high spirits ; but no sooner had they left me and I had crossed the threshold, bag in hand, than I found all my gaiety oozing out at my finger-tips. There was a grave air about the place which gave an impression of strict attention to business. I glanced into a little cubicle on one side of the entrance-hall ; a young surgeon was stitching up the head of a van-driver, who had probably fallen off his box. In a corresponding apartment on the other side of the atrium another young doctor was administering aid to a poor woman, who was covered with mud and appeared to have been recently run over.

Presently the receiving-officer called me to his desk :

‘ Name ?’

‘ Charles Brookfield.’

‘ Address ?’

‘ 27A, Sackville Street, Piccadilly.’

‘ Nearest friend ?’

‘ I beg your pardon ?’

‘ Nearest friend, in case anything happens.’

‘ Oh, I see ! My wife, I suppose.’

‘ Same address ?’

‘ Oh yes, certainly.’

Then the porter hoisted my bag on his shoulder and led the way up a staircase and along a long corridor to a lofty, airy, dimly-lighted room, where I was received by the Sister of the ward, a delightful kindly lady—Sister Frances she was called—and two nurses. They set up a screen and bade me undress, which I did, and got into bed. It was an operation-bed, harder and higher than an ordinary one, but very comfortable. I slept very soundly. In the morning the Sister held a kind of parade of—apparently—all the appliances the hospital possessed. She arranged on a table in my full view, to my great discomposure, a jar of chloroform and a jar of ether, each with a minute pyramidal felt cap over the stopper (destined presently to be used in stifling me), rolls of lint and of cotton-wool, a

tourniquet, various kinds of threads for tying arteries, and all sorts of basins and utensils and leather cases and towels, till I felt as though I were going to be cut into hundreds of pieces. Presently Bellamy arrived, accompanied by his poisoner, who appeared to me, from the cheerfulness of his countenance, to have a very inadequate idea of his responsibilities. Bellamy himself was looking pale and, I thought, anxious. He leant over my bed and confided to me that he had been dining with old Somebody the night before, and they'd had a late night. I felt inclined to suggest that he should postpone the operation to another day, when his nerves might be steadier. But it was too late ; the anæsthetist had pushed my bed forward on its well-oiled castors, and was busy hoccusing me with a capful of chloroform. After a few seconds he lifted my eyelid, and said, ‘He’s gone off.’ And then I felt like a man in a nightmare. I tried to call out that I was still in full possession of all my faculties, but I could neither speak nor move. Just then the toxicologist clapped another cap over my nose and mouth, this time sprinkled with ether. ‘Now,’ I reflected, ‘he’s overdone it. I don’t suppose he really *meant* to kill me, but that’s what he’s done. This is the end ; this is death.’ And thousands of wheels of various colours began to whirl to a rapid, pulsating accompaniment which soon melted into an alarming dream,

in which I fancied I was pursued by some deformed creature so hideous that I dared not turn round and face it. And then I heard voices, apparently a long way off, which gradually came nearer and nearer and more and more intelligible, until they turned out to be those of Bellamy and his Friar Laurence friend at the foot of my bed, discussing some scientific topic of the day.

I had a very happy ten days in Charing Cross Hospital. Bellamy scribbled on the slate over my bed, 'Free diet; two ounces of whisky, one cigar after dinner.' The nurses were most attentive and kind, and the food was excellent.

I went a little while ago to pay a visit to a friend of mine who had broken his ankle, and who had been taken to Westminster Hospital. 'Can you tell me where I shall find Mr. Anning?' I inquired of the hall-porter. 'Second door on the left on the third floor,' he replied. 'No! I'm wrong,' he called after me, correcting himself. 'It's the second floor —turn to your left—the third door.' I rather confused these directions in my mind, and I think I must have gone to the third door on the third floor. I was a little surprised to find my old friend appeared to be indulging in the extravagance of a private ward. However, I burst in, heartily, and found myself alone in a small room with a poor corpse all bandaged up and neatly arranged. I was so taken

aback that, hardly knowing what I did, I made a low bow, and stammered out, 'Oh, I *beg* your pardon!' and withdrew. I found Anning in the accident ward on the floor below, on the highroad to recovery, indulging in a substantial tea, with a boiled egg in an indiarubber egg-cup.

Although Mrs. Chalmers was nearer seventy than sixty, she still stood somewhat in awe of her elder sister, Lady Derwentwater, who was eighty-three, and who, on the death of their mother sixty years before, had acted *in loco parentis* to all her younger brothers and sisters. The relationship between the two was much more that of guardian and ward than of sister and sister, and it was more a sense of duty than a desire for affectionate intercourse which prompted Mrs. Chalmers to pay a monthly visit to her rather formidable kinswoman. All the family—there had been ten sisters and four brothers—were tall, straight, and vigorous.

Lady Derwentwater, despite her eighty-three years, daily read the *Times* without spectacles, and until recently had been in the habit of walking her three or four miles a day. But for some time past she had had a pain in one of her knees, and, like most people who have never been ailing before, was very impatient of the slight discomfort she had to suffer. It never occurred to her that age might have something to do with her trifling visitation.

She believed it to be entirely owing to the carelessness or incapacity of her medical advisers, and she accordingly changed her doctor about once a week.

One day, when Mrs. Chalmers called at her sister's house in Onslow Square, she met in the hall an old friend of the family, Major-General Fontanier, who had only lately returned from India, and whom she had not seen for twenty or thirty years. ‘How are you, my dear old friend?’ she exclaimed cordially, putting out her hand. ‘How very delightful to see you again after all these years! And how very well you’re looking, and, if I may be allowed to say so, how remarkably young!’ ‘Thank you, my dear Mrs. Chalmers,’ replied the old soldier, but in a pre-occupied tone, as though he had something grave upon his mind or conscience. ‘You’re extremely kind. I—I’m sorry I have to go just as you’re arriving.’ ‘Have you seen my sister? How is she?’ asked Mrs. Chalmers. ‘Oh yes, I’ve *seen* her,’ answered the General, with unaccountable embarrassment. ‘I *have—er—*seen her,’ he repeated. ‘She’s—er—she seemed to me, I regret to say, a good deal changed—in her manner, that is.’ ‘*Must* you go in such a hurry?’ pleaded Mrs. Chalmers. ‘I’m sure my sister would be delighted if I could persuade you to come back.’ ‘No, no, no!’ cried the old gentleman emphatically. ‘I—I really must be off, and at once. Good-day to

you, my dear Mrs. Chalmers—good-day.’ And he hurried down the steps as fast as his stiff little legs could carry him. Mrs. Chalmers was a good deal mystified by the singular bearing of her old friend, but she made her way upstairs. ‘How are you, my dear Maria?’ she inquired of her sister, who was lying on the sofa. ‘I hope you’re no longer in pain.’ ‘I am suffering the *acutest agony*,’ Lady Derwentwater retorted. ‘I wrote to Dr. Fairchild, and enclosed a cheque, and told him that, as he evidently did not understand my case, I had to request him not to call again. And I sent for a new man, Dr.—I forget his name, but somebody Rhoda recommended. He called just now. You may have met him in the hall.’ (Mrs. Chalmers began to guess at the cause of the gallant General’s discomfiture.) ‘He was a stupid little man,’ the elder sister went on. ‘He came bounding into the room, and greeted me with all the effusion of an old friend. I let him look at my tongue, which seemed to puzzle him. And then I said, “Perhaps you would like to see my knee,” and I showed it to him. He stuck his eyeglass in his eye in a most affected way, and exclaimed: “Devilish fine, ’pon my honour!” (I really don’t know what medical practitioners are coming to!) I asked him if I might drink a glass of port. He said, “By all means, my dear madam; but don’t ask me to join

you. I daren't touch it myself." He then said he had to be off. "But aren't you going to *give* me anything?" I exclaimed. But the extraordinary little man was halfway down the stairs by that time. I shall certainly write to Rhoda and tell her what I think of him!"

I lived once in a ground-floor flat in Albert Mansions. I forget the number, but my bedroom was exactly over the Underground Railway, and my soap-dish used to rattle every day at 6 a.m. as the first train passed beneath it. I came home one morning at about half-past two, and was soon in a very sound sleep. A few hours later, probably at about five, I heard a report which woke me *en sursaut*. It sounded to me like the report of a pistol. And, while I was wondering who could be discharging firearms in my immediate neighbourhood, and why, and so forth, slumber re-took me, and I fell back into a stertorous, dreamless sleep. Two or three hours later I was awakened again by a huge fireman, fully equipped in a brass helmet, and with brass shoulder-guards, who was attacking the door of my bathroom, which was close to my bed. He was much too great a swell to open the door in the ordinary way, by turning the handle. He preferred to fell it in a professional manner with his axe. A hose like a sea-serpent was then trailed through my room, and my magnifi-

cent new friend grasped its brazen snout and commenced to pour tons of water into my tiny lavatory. It appeared that my neighbour overhead was due to arrive that morning from the Continent, and that some faithful servant had put a mattress to air in front of the fire, that a red-hot coal had leapt on to the bed and set it smouldering, that presently the fire spread to the floor, and that the sound I had heard, which I had taken to be a pistol-shot, was caused by all the furniture of the apartment above—tables, chairs, ottomans, bookcases, knick-knacks, coal-scuttle, etc.—falling within three yards of my head into my bath. But the fireman assured me the fire was under control, and could not reach my bed, so I turned over and finished my sleep.

I forget with what society my furniture was insured, but I wrote to the secretary, and an agent called upon me the following day. I opened a pint of champagne. We each drank a glass. ‘That’s an extremely nice wine, sir,’ remarked the agent. ‘I’m very glad you like it,’ said I. ‘It’s a *very* nice wine indeed, sir,’ he went on to say, smacking his lips. ‘I was in the wine trade myself at one time, and I appreciate a good glass of wine. Thank’ee, sir.’ We then proceeded to inspect the wretched bathroom. My neighbour’s furniture, so suddenly hurled into my charge, had been by this time removed. ‘Well, sir,’ said the agent, ‘what do

you claim on?' 'I'm afraid I can't put in much of a claim,' I replied reluctantly. 'You see, there was practically no furniture in the room. Only a wash-stand and, as it happened, an old portmanteau.' 'Mahogany washstand with double row of tiles in back,' murmured my friend as he wrote in his notebook. 'China ewer, basin, soap-dish, brush-holder, sponge-bowl, and slop-pail. And *what* did you say besides, sir? A portmanteau?' And, with no prompting from me, he continued to dictate to himself: 'Sole-leather portmanteau, turnover foldings, cap corners, extra thick, turned over at ends, four steel bands. Was there *nothing* else in the room, sir?' he inquired. 'We're not allowed to make suggestions, you understand, sir,' he added. 'But, I suppose, when you get out of your bath, you just stand on the bare boards, don't you, sir?' 'Oh no,' I said; 'there was a scrap of carpet of some kind.' 'Thank you, sir,' said my friend, returning to his notes. 'Axminster seamless carpet, 6 feet by 9 feet, with border. And you don't mind, I suppose, sir,' he proceeded, 'the neighbours looking in and seeing you in your bath? Of course you'll excuse my asking, but we're not allowed to suggest——' 'There was a blind to the window, of course,' I said. '*Very well*, then,' retorted my friend with rising enthusiasm; '*that's* what I wanted to know;' and he went on muttering

his inventory as he wrote it : ‘ Inside roller blind, best worsted tammy, with best shaped valance, finished with fringe to match.’ I forget what I ultimately received from the company ; I fancy it was nearly £50. And if only I had done the thing handsomely, and opened a bottle instead of a pint, I feel it might have run into three figures.

I think firemen are more childish than even doctors on the subject of professional etiquette (witness the man who would chop down my door instead of opening it by the handle). One night during the run of ‘ An Ideal Husband ’ at the Hay-market, during the management of Messrs. Waller and Morrell, a little fire broke out on the stage behind the scenes, out of sight of the audience. Jack the fireman chanced at the moment to be over the way at the Waterloo, ‘ splicing the main-brace.’ The conflagration was a very trifling one. A lamp had been upset, and a few yards of stage round about began to splutter and flicker. Two or three men who happened to be near stamped out the flames, and the call-boy gave the expiring embers their *coup de grâce* (homely, old wife’s remedies are often the best) by spitting upon the few scattered sparks that remained. At that moment (that is to say, when all was over) the zealous Jack appeared, brave in brass, an axe in one hand and adjusting the

curb of his helmet with the other. I rather think he was shouting ‘Hi, hi, hi !’ under the impression he was on his engine and clearing a passage through a crowded thoroughfare. It was sad to witness his disappointment when he reached the spot where the flicker had taken place. He looked round, heaved a sigh, and retired, muttering as he went away, ‘It’s a jolly funny thing people can’t mind their own business. ‘Ow would *they* like it, I wonder, if I was to go on to the stage and play their bloomin’ parts for ‘em ?’

Much has been said about the danger of smoking in theatres ; but after a great deal of inquiry I have only heard of one case where a fire (and that no more serious than the one I have just mentioned) has occurred in a theatre owing to the use of tobacco. It was several years ago, and, I fancy, at the Criterion.

It was the duty of the night-watchman (who was also a fireman) to patrol the theatre at intervals—say every four hours—and this duty he conscientiously carried out. At four o’clock one morning he found the cocoanut matting in one of the passages ignited and glowing. He speedily extinguished it, and then set himself to think to what this conflagration could owe its origin. Being a man with a memory and a logical mind and Sherlock Holmes instincts, he finally came to the conclusion that the

cause of this phenomenon was traceable to the fact that, on his previous round to see that all was safe, he had chosen that particular spot at which to empty out against his heel the contents of the pipe he was smoking.

CHAPTER XIV

A political programme—Trial by jury—Justice shuts her eyes—
An adroit ‘get-out’—A company case—A peevish Judge—
The jury disagree—In the Isle of Wight—Shipwrecks—A
zealous coastguard—The *Irex*—The Complete Reciter at
fault—A trip to Madeira—A burial at sea—Hospitality at
Funchal—Dutch courage.

PROMINENT in the multitude of matters about which I know absolutely nothing is the subject of politics ; but I found myself one night in the smoking-room of the Old Ship Hotel, Brighton, during election week, when everyone was talking vehemently and enthusiastically about the Conservative candidate (they were Tories to a man), and it would have been not only churlish, but almost dangerous, not to have joined in the pæan of praise. However, emboldened by the cup, I determined to ‘go one better’ than the rest. So, when I was appealed to, I said calmly : ‘I take no interest in the present election. I shall not go to the poll, nor shall I ever support a candidate until one shall appear willing to pledge himself to my programme.’ ‘And what may

that be, sir?' asked the Conservative agent earnestly. 'Abolition of the liberty of the press,' said I, 'abolition of trial by jury, and abolition of the House of Commons; legislation by the monarch, supported by the House of Peers.' There was a storm of applause; I was acclaimed as the profoundest politician in the room. Everyone agreed that my programme was an excellent one. And as years roll on, I am becoming more and more convinced of its soundness myself.

My opinion of jurymen was founded on personal experience. It was about twelve years ago that I had to go through the extremely unpleasant experience of serving on a special jury. There was no evading the summons—'to be and appear in Her Majesty's High Court of Justice.' I was over twenty-one and under sixty years of age; I was not a borough treasurer, nor a coroner, nor a duly registered dentist (40 and 41 Vict., c. xxxiii., s. 30), nor a gaoler's sub-officer, nor a peer, nor a Sheriff's officer, nor one of the Brethren of Trinity House; in short, I was not in the possession or pursuit of any office or occupation which secured me immunity from the obligation to serve on juries. I was accordingly duly awed by the final ominous sentence in the summons, 'Hereof fail not,' and I repaired to Court No. something—I forget what—of the Queen's Bench Division at the Royal Courts of

Justice at a quarter-past ten of the clock in the forenoon precisely on the day specified. The only occupant of the court when I arrived was the usher, who, with an obvious sense of the confidence reposed in him, was engaged in the task of collecting, sorting, and redistributing numberless quill pens. I was glad that I met him, for he was the only official of all whom I met who at all realized my ideal of what a legal magnate should be. He was judicial though not pedantic, patronizing though not supercilious, and busy though not industrious. I trust this gentleman is well paid, and that he is not obliged to keep up his position merely on occasional tips of the odd shilling from the special juryman's guinea. Gradually the court filled. My fellow-compurgators and I crowded round the Associate of the court, and everyone endeavoured to convince him how exceptionally inconvenient it was in the particular case of each to leave his business to attend to that of the Crown. The Associate was civil but obdurate. There was, accordingly, nothing for us to do but to take up our places at the back of the court and wait to be empanelled. Presently my friend the usher announced the arrival of the Judge, and Lord Silverton entered, supported by a faithful old white-haired retainer, who attended to his lordship throughout the day, brought him his medicine, and so forth. The case was one which had been part heard, so

the jury of the day before took their places. It was a case in which a widow sued a shipping company for damages for the loss of her husband, who had been killed by the alleged negligence of one of the workmen employed by the company, and much use was made of a model vessel, the rigging of which soon became hopelessly entangled by the nervous manœuvrings of a junior counsel with a limited knowledge of navigation. But this case was soon disposed of, and immediately afterwards, at about mid-day, my name was called out with those of eleven others, and we entered the box.

The action which we had to try was brought by a young mechanic against a tramway company for damages for injuries received in a fall from one of their cars. The case was a very simple and commonplace one, so much so that Lord Silverton on his return from luncheon—whether from lack of interest in a case about which his quick perception had at the outset enabled him to make up his mind, or merely from the effects of the process of digestion—allowed himself to fall fast asleep. I am bound to admit that he had heard two or three witnesses for the plaintiff before slumber beguiled him; he had even been sufficiently awake in the early part of the afternoon to repeat, as his own, a mild witticism of the junior counsel, and to join deprecatingly in the laughter which greeted the little joke when it came

from the lips of his lordship. But from about five minutes to three till a quarter past Lord Silverton slept like a child of a year old. It was only the work of a few seconds, however, for the Associate and the usher and the white-haired servant aforesaid to arouse his lordship when the time came. And considering the shock of waking from dreams of a rural retreat covered with honeysuckle, and of clambering little ones with golden heads lisping forth prayers for appointments and sinecures and marshalships, to the stern reality of a British law-court, where justice is impartially administered, it is hardly to his lordship's discredit that he should inadvertently have begun to sum up upon the previous case. 'Gentlemen of the jury,' he commenced, 'it is for you to decide whether you attach credit to the evidence given by the witnesses for the plaintiff or to that given by the witnesses for the defendant. If you believe the evidence of the stevedore, you will come to the conclusion that the starboard guy-rope was slackened off in so sudden and unskilful a manner as to imperil the safety of anyone standing on or near the counter or in proximity to the binnacle. You will be bound, in that case, to come to the conclusion——' 'I beg your pardon, my lord,' exclaimed a rash young barrister employed in the case, 'but this is the case of Lucock and the Trans-suburban Tramcar Company.' 'Well, well,' retorted his

lordship (a little testily, I thought), ‘it’s a precisely similar case. And that, gentlemen’—turning to us with confidential impressiveness—‘is why I mention it. Probably many of you were in court when the case to which I refer was tried, and such of you will see the analogy. Both cases were cases of negligence;’ and so forth. I thought the old gentleman extricated himself from what to many would have proved an awkward dilemma with noteworthy grace and skill.

On the following day I inadvertently took the corner-seat next the Judge—who on this occasion was Mr. Justice Manikin—and discovered that I had thereby constituted myself foreman. The case was that of *Pennycuic v. The Godshill Valley Railway Company*. It appeared that Miss Pennycuic, an elderly spinster, living at Upper Norwood, dazzled by the prospectus of this company, had, some two years before, invested £500 in a fresh issue of shares in the form of preference stock, which was to pay $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. before any dividend was paid on the ordinary or deferred shares. The paragraph which had attracted the eye of the unfortunate Miss Pennycuic was the last in the prospectus :

‘The fresh issue of preference shares is offered in advance *at par* to shareholders in any of the four other Isle of Wight Railway Companies, as it is

obviously to their interest to invest in shares in the new Company, which will so materially enhance the value of the stock they already hold. *On and after April 1st next all the shares not subscribed for (if any) will be offered to the general public at a premium of six per cent. All the ordinary shares have been subscribed for and fully paid up.*

Miss Pennycuic was already a shareholder in the Isle of Wight Central Railway; so it appeared to her that if she were to buy £500 worth of this preference stock at par, hold it until April 1, and then sell it to the public at six premium, she would be, as they say in the City, ‘on velvet.’ And in theory she was right; but she was unable practically to carry out her scheme, as, although the shares were duly *offered* to the public at six premium, they found no buyers, nor did they when offered at ten, twenty, fifty, or even eighty, discount. There was, furthermore, a misleading lack of frankness about the final dozen words above quoted.

When Sir Humphrey Scratchell, Bart., the promoter of the company—in fact, all that remained of the company—and the defendant in the suit, had applied to Parliament for permission to give fresh impetus to his company by making a fresh issue of shares to the public, this permission was accorded to him only in the event that he could show that all the original shares had been fully paid up. As only

about £5,000 worth had been applied for, Sir Humphrey was for a moment nonplussed, until he hit on the happy idea of handing over about £240,000 worth of shares to his contractor in payment of a bill for about £10,000. Practically, putting minor points on one side, the question for the jury to decide upon was whether the suppression in the prospectus of the fact that the contractor was receiving payment of his bill in shares, and not in cash, and that the great majority of the shares described as 'fully paid up' had been handed over to the contractor in such payment, amounted to a fraudulent suppression or not.

Mr. Wince, Q.C., conducted the case for the plaintiff with great skill; in fact, his hobnobbing method with the jury struck me as being on the whole even more convincing than the quietly-indignant dignity of Mr. Findlater, Q.C. (for the defendant), who, however, at times almost succeeded in conveying the impression that a board of railway directors was a species of court of honour. The case went smoothly and straightforwardly enough. There was one slight delay of twenty minutes or so, when Mr. Justice Manikin, slightly overrating his mental agility, endeavoured to find a marked passage on the page of a ledger which was handed to him by Mr. Wince.

'Who is this Mr. Jones?' asked his lordship, look-

ing over the top of his double eye-glasses. ‘I have nothing about him in my notes.’

‘Your lordship is looking at the wrong page,’ said Mr. Wince. ‘If your lordship would kindly look at the right-hand page instead of the left-hand page——’

‘But why should I *not* look at the left-hand page?’ said his lordship, beginning to look seriously suspicious.

‘Because, my lord, with great deference, there’s nothing there concerning this particular case,’ said Mr. Wince, with an engaging smile.

‘But if there’s nothing here concerning this particular case,’ repeated the Judge, puzzled, and getting rather annoyed, ‘why am I given this ledger at all?’

‘I was anxious for your lordship to glance at the passage which I marked in pencil on the right-hand page, but if your lordship thinks it immaterial——’ said Mr. Wince apologetically.

‘I had better commence at the first page, and read this ledger entirely through,’ snapped his lordship, thoroughly displeased, and convinced that he was being imposed upon. And whilst Mr. Justice Manikin was engaged in trying to decipher immaterial matter contained in the ledger (which I am by no means sure he had not by this time got upside down), Mr. Wince took the opportunity to confide

to us a number of statements disparaging to Sir Humphrey Scratchell, but which in no wise concerned the case before us, and with regard to which Mr. Findlater in vain appealed to his lordship, who in his turn was far too much engrossed in the financial career of Mr. Jones, as shown on the left-hand pages, to exert his authority and check Mr. Wince. At the conclusion of the Judge's summing up, it was, I believe, a surprise to most people, and not least to Sir Humphrey and his counsel, who both appeared to me to be ill concealing their amused surprise, to find there were certain of the jury who were inclined to find for the defendant. We were accordingly despatched in the custody of the usher, and locked into a large underground room walled with tiles, containing a table and twelve chairs. An 'old hand' present suggested that we should all agree to return the verdict of the majority, but this proposal was negatived as being too sensible. It turned out that we were in the proportion of eight to four—that is to say, eight for the plaintiff and four for the defendant. And never before that time, when I discussed the evidence which had been laid before us, and saw the peculiar points of view from which the typical jurymen contemplates any assortment of fact, did I at all appreciate the extent to which England owes her world-wide reputation for honesty and fairness,

judiciously tempered with shrewdness, to the maintenance and practice of her system of trial by jury. The first man I approached was almost indignant that the *bona-fides* of the prospectus should be impugned. ‘Why,’ said he, at the end of a long harangue, as a final *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole case, ‘I myself have made statements in many a prospectus which were quite as bad as any in this here one.’ I tried to explain that, as these other prospectuses were not under consideration, he might, without in any way dimming the rosy rays in which his own statements therein contained had been allowed to bask, contemplate in a colder light the illegitimate assertions of Sir Humphrey Scratchell. ‘All I can say is,’ he persisted, ‘if this here prospectus is fraudulent, then half the prospectuses in the City are fraudulent.’ And he folded his arms as a sign that the discussion, so far as he was concerned, was at an end. His next neighbour repeated all this, only in a more polished manner, being a man of more finished, or, at all events, of more satisfactorily commenced, education. He gave his remarks quite a classical gloss by stating more than once ‘that, whereas there may be a certain amount of *suppressio veri* in this prospectus, there appears to me to be no *expositio falsi*.’ And I think the pleasure of thus glibly talking Latin to an audience of eleven fellow-citizens was a far

greater reward to him than the guinea he afterwards received for his services. The next whom I tried to win over was an entirely different specimen of juryman. He was standing aloof from the rest, with a rather amused expression of face—a fair, bronzed, military-looking young man, in a smart, loose, blue great-coat, and a very brightly-shining hat tipped over his eyes. He only laughed languidly when I endeavoured to discuss the facts of the case with him, and all I could get out of him was that ‘the poor old Johnnie wanted the stuff devilish bad—and he got it, by gad! Devilish smart of the old Johnnie!’ It was impossible to persuade this light-hearted son of Mars to take any other than this somewhat flippantly cynical view of the position. The fourth and final supporter of the defendant’s case was a far more familiar and British type of juryman. ‘Gentlemen,’ he said, addressing all of us in the tone of one in the habit of appealing to the higher sentiments of respectable ratepayers, ‘who are we that we should stamp a gentleman—I may say a Baronet—of Sir Humphrey Scratchell’s position with so grave a—a—taint as the—the stigma of fraud? We had it in evidence, gentlemen—I don’t know if you gave the matter your attention—but we had it in evidence that Sir Humphrey passes his holidays *at home*—in his own country. *He* doesn’t go off to Homburg or Switzerland or France,

spending his money on foreigners. And I venture to maintain that it is our duty to *encourage* our aristocracy in this course, and not to throw cold water upon them by finding them guilty of fraud.'

To make a long story less long, the jury failed to agree. We were reprimanded for our obstinacy by Mr. Justice Manikin, and poor old Miss Pennycuic failed to recover her £500, and had to pay her own costs. Each of us jurymen received a guinea for assisting at a sad miscarriage of justice.

Indeed, I personally made a little more, for I wrote an article for the *Speaker*, and another for the *St. James's Gazette* (to which I have been permitted to refer), which together brought me in another seven guineas.

When I lived in the Isle of Wight, I asked my friend Harry Damant, who was Lloyd's agent for the island, to let me know some day when he had news of a shipwreck. Accordingly, he called for me one February morning in a dogcart, and told me he had just received tidings of two wrecks—one in the neighbourhood of St. Catherine's Point and the other on the Needles. 'I expect we'd better go to the St. Catherine's Point one,' he said. 'I think she's the more likely to be a big vessel.' So we drove off to the south point of the island, and Atherstone Damant, a younger brother, was despatched to the Needles. When we reached our destination

we found nothing thrilling—only a comic wreck. A few months before His Imperial Majesty the Kaiser had very generously sent a gold medal to someone for rendering assistance by means of the rocket apparatus to a German crew (envious tongues maintained that the medal reached the wrong man); and after that gracious act the whole of the South Coast spent their time scouring the horizon with their telescopes in hopes of spying another Teuton vessel in distress, while the coastguard kept a formidable rocket always ready, poised upon its tripod. On this particular morning a little fishing smack, with a crew of three men and a boy, appeared to be in difficulties about fifty yards from shore. The inhabitants—possessed with this new life-saving mania—assembled on the beach, determined to salve it if only to keep their hands in. Although the fishermen shouted that they were all right and needed no assistance, the bronze-faced coastguard fixed his tripod, levelled his projectile, and with unerring aim sent it whizzing through the little boat's bows. She soon settled down, and the crew waded ashore blaspheming.

When we got home that night, we found that Atherstone had not yet returned. So we went early next morning to the Needles and found the wreck there had been the really serious one. She was a big three-masted schooner—the *Irex* from Greenock,

brand-new, on her first trip. She lay, her bows in the air, with the sea breaking over her after-deck. Seven lives had been lost, including the captain's; the rest had been saved by the very apparatus the use of which had been burlesqued the day before. But a good deal occurred—so I learnt—calculated to shake one's belief in the poems about the saving of life at sea which are so proudly and glibly recited at penny readings, and so rapturously applauded. In the first place, the lifeboat—instead of riding over the billows propelled by brawny arms and hearts of oak, with wives and sweethearts waving their handkerchiefs on the distant shore—was towed by a tug to within hailing distance of the disabled vessel, and, after a short colloquy under difficulties, was towed home again without rescuing anyone. Then, again, when the rocket had been successfully used and the hawser made taut between the top of the cliff and the mainmast—in the rigging of which ten or a dozen soured and half-frozen wretches were desperately clinging—all were got safely ashore but one—a lad with a broken leg. ‘Who'll go and save the boy?’ someone sang out. According to all tradition, there should have been a rush of volunteers. But, as a matter of fact, although there was a large crowd assembled, mostly men used to the sea and its perils, nobody would run the risk. The boy was left freezing in the rigging, his broken leg dangling,

until morning, when the ship's cook, a nigger, consented to go and fetch him.

I went on board, with Damant, at about mid-day. We found one of the apprentices' diary, kept up to the evening before the wreck. The last words were : 'Cargo shifted. We are bound to go down. Going to have a game at cards.' The poor boy was drowned, but he had had his game, for we found the cards scattered about his cabin, which was half under water. I picked up the six and the two of hearts, which were making 'Baccarat' on the end of his bunk, and I have had them inlaid into the cover of a card-box made out of a piece of teak which I found on deck.

At the end of December, 1886, I went by the s.s. *Pretoria* to Madeira for a few days. A rather gruesome incident took place on the voyage out. I was walking about on deck on New Year's Eve, after dinner, with a very pleasant man—a second-class passenger—who talked affectionately about his wife and baby, told me he was going to Natal, partly for pleasure, partly on business, and partly for his health. We turned in at about half-past eleven. Next morning my servant told me he and others had been awoke in the night by cries for help, had rushed to my friend's cabin, from which they proceeded, and found him struggling with the steward. It appeared that my new acquaintance was a dipso-

maniac, and that he had contrived to smuggle a bottle or two of brandy into his cabin, that after turning in he had made an incursion upon his cellar, and had brought on an attack of delirium tremens. After he had been tied down he had had a relapse, and died at about two in the morning. At about a quarter to twelve, off Porto Santo, the engines slowed down and a bell was tolled. We all came forward, none of us quite sure of what was to take place, and discovered that the remains of the unfortunate man were about to be buried in the sea. There happened to be a couple of hundred troops on board, who were paraded, and added to the picturesqueness of the scene. The body was brought up by six bare-footed blue-jackets in white ducks. It was stitched up in a hammock, with weights at the feet, borne upon a plank, and covered with the British flag. The skipper read the service, and when he pronounced the words, 'We therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption,' etc., the plank was tipped up, and from beneath the Union Jack the grisly load plunged into the sea. Immediately afterwards 'ping—ping' sounded from the bridge, the screw resumed its revolutions, and most of us hurried off to smoke and chat and cheer ourselves as best we might. In the saloon the second officer was eating a hurried meal preparatory to taking his watch. A young Anglican

curate, who was stimulating himself with a glass of sherry, waxed eloquent over the scene we had just witnessed. ‘I never saw anything more impressive,’ said he, in tones which betrayed Oxford as his alma mater—‘the clear blue sky, the purple ocean, here and there a seagull poised in mid-air, the impressive words of the service, the rugged earnestness of the old sea-captain, the very *engines* silent, as if to pay tribute to the soul that had gone from amongst us!’ ‘Oh, it wasn’t for *that*!’ exclaimed the second officer, in perfect simplicity, his mouth full of cold beef and pickles; ‘it was for fear the body should foul the screw.’

We presently arrived at Funchal, and I went to the Santa Clara Hotel. It was very full, and I was given rooms in the *annexe*. The Madeira residents are extremely hospitable, and when my name appeared in the visitors’ list I received invitations immediately from all who survived of the old friends my father and mother had made when they had spent a season at Madeira in 1853. I had a delightful dinner with the Hintons one night. (Old Hinton had been at one time in the Royal Navy, and could only sleep in a bunk of his own contriving, slung by its four corners from the ceiling, in which he used nightly to swing himself to sleep. This he showed me with pardonable pride.) I was touched by the simple way in which my host and hostess

continued the conversation they had left off with my parents thirty-four years previously. 'And how is Stephen Spring Rice, who was here with your father?' they asked. 'Oh, he died, I think, before I was born,' I had to reply, 'or, at all events, when I was quite a child.' 'Indeed, I'm sorry to hear that,' said Mrs. Hinton. 'He *seemed* quite strong and well.' And they inquired with the same friendly solicitude about numbers of old friends who had been sleeping peacefully in their graves for a quarter of a century. They gave me an excellent dinner and plied me with rare vintages of Madeira wine to such an extent that, when I left their hospitable *quinta* (I had been almost a teetotaler for about a month), I was quite conscious, to quote from the police courts, that I 'had been dining.' However, I was able to walk without the semblance of a lurch back to the Santa Clara, to wind up my watch, fold my clothes, and 'retire in order' to bed. Suddenly, in the middle of the night, I awoke, and saw my bedroom distinctly jerk from left to right twice, and after a pause repeat the performance. The ewer rattled in the basin with each oscillation, and even the chairs and table seemed to join in the strange supernatural fandango. 'This,' said I to myself, 'is evidently an effect peculiar to the wines of Madeira, and no doubt the phenomenon is enhanced by my abnormal abstinence of the last few

weeks. I could never have believed,' I went on to think, 'that a mere nervous paralysis of the brain, due to drinking an extra glass or two of good wine, could possibly have produced such a complete optical illusion.' And, musing in this fashion, I soon fell back into a sound sleep. In the morning, when I left my *annexe* to go to breakfast, I was astounded to find the garden of the hotel converted into a kind of concentration camp. Such of my fellow-guests as had not hired surf-boats and put out to sea were huddled together under extemporized tents nursing their jewel-cases, dressing-bags, and valuables. 'Oh, sir!' cried one or two, 'do you mean to say that *you* stayed in your room *all night?* What a brave man you must be!' It appeared that during the night the island had been visited by a violent earthquake, which I, in all innocence, had attributed to the bowl!

CHAPTER XV

Monte Carlo—The enchantment of the place—Sunny memories
—A giant in those days—The *dégringolade* of the croupier—
A disputed stake—Playing on a system—The only sure way
to win—French detectives—Their naïveté—A French ‘con-
fidence-man.’

A PRACTICAL man with no imagination or adaptability will see in Monte Carlo only a garish Margate with a monotonous sea, a deceptive sun, and murderous winds, shoddy people, vice in most unbecoming dishabille, and he will resent being charged a missionary’s ransom for a brandy-and-soda. To enjoy Monte Carlo, you must be willing to be mesmerized, to submit your will and judgment to the fairy spirit of the place. You immediately find yourself in a twinkling paradise where money is public property—that is to say, as soon as your pocket is empty, you borrow from the nearest stranger (the ordinary unit being a *mille*, or about £40); where everyone is happy in the possession of the philosopher’s stone—that is to say, of a system different from anyone else’s, by which the

element of chance is entirely removed from the games of roulette and trente-et-quarante ; where you enjoy sumptuous banquets, not knowing who is host—sometimes it may prove to be yourself ; where you eat, drink, drive, gamble, shoot, shop, love, lend, borrow, until the end of April, when the family solicitor disenchants you and brings you home to everyday life.

The Princess—up the hill, opposite the casino, not far from the Métropole—was the restaurant which the particular section of Monte Carlo society which I knew best used to patronize two or three years ago. It was admirably managed by Monsieur Aubanel and his handsome wife. A table was always reserved for us in the bright, white-enamelled grill-room which opened on to the street. The food was very good and, for Monte Carlo, very cheap—that is to say, the prices were about the same as at the Savoy Hotel in London. In the middle of the room was a large table covered with a spotless white cloth, on which were arranged studies in still life—fruit, game, fish, vegetables, even tiny joints. And at this buffet each selected what he fancied. The beautiful, buxom, big-hearted, and much-divorced Muriel Kinnleside was generally at our table, often attended by a shy lad who was nicknamed The Tadpole, his real name being Newte. Jack Deeley, the pigeon-shot, was always there, and poor Tom

Dexter, who is now no more. Satyr-faced little Asti, the composer, was frequently of our party, sometimes with his charming wife, and sometimes not. We were rather too Bohemian for Isidore Notadore, but now and then, when more august hosts could spare him, he would look in and give us a little tone. At the end of the banquet, whoever felt richest produced a purse and paid the bill. When nobody had any money—which happened on one or two rare occasions—the meal was put down to Tom Dexter, who was staying at the hotel, and had a running, though tethered, account. It is difficult to imagine Monte Carlo without Tom Dexter. He was popular with everyone, even the police authorities, with whom he occasionally joined issue. He was extremely good-natured, tall, loose-limbed, athletic, a good pigeon-shot, but, owing to his generosity, carelessness, and fondness for the tables, generally in financial low-water. His most celebrated exploit with the Monte Carlo police was many years ago, before the local round-house was rebuilt. In those days it was like a prison in an opera ‘set’—that is to say, it consisted of a small room, built of stone, with heavy doors studded with nails. Tom had caused some disturbance late at night, and, after invaliding several officers of the law, he was finally overcome by numbers, and at last led off by ten tiny *commissaires de police* to this

ridiculous dungeon. The door was unlocked, and eight of Tom's guardians preceded him into the cell. Their ill manners cost them their liberty, for no sooner were they inside than Tom seized the other two by the scruffs of their necks, threw them in after their companions, and locked the massive doors upon them. He then threw the key into one of the fountains, strolled home to bed, and slept the sleep of a Samson. In the morning a smiling Chief Inspector called upon him and told him that if only he would restore the key, or tell them where it was to be found, all should be forgiven. Tom, however, denied all knowledge of the night's adventure, and by his truculent demeanour so terrified the police official that he tore downstairs, leaving his hat behind him. The prison doors had to be prized open by workmen. But nothing came of it, as far as Dexter was concerned, and, for all I know, the key lies still in the basin of the fountain.

The last time I saw Tom Dexter at Monte Carlo he was just starting to call upon the British Consul. 'I've got a pretty clear case this time,' he said sanguinely—'these rotten little gendarmes! I'm going to give 'em a lesson. A thousand pounds damages, or I'll know the reason why.' 'What have they done this time?' I asked. 'Took us off last night—me and Peter Parley and Jem Finney—and locked us up,' he exclaimed with the air of a martyr. 'And

one little wretch actually presented a revolver at my head!' 'What had you been doing?' I inquired. 'Nothing at all,' said Tom decisively; 'that's to say, we came out of the club—the room upstairs, you know—rather late, and we wanted a drink. There wasn't any light in the Hôtel de Paris, and they didn't answer the bell, so I just tried with my shoulder if the door was fastened, and it opened of its own accord. We switched up the light and found some whisky and syphons, and, as there was nobody to wait on us, we helped ourselves, naturally. Suddenly a lot of these little *commissaire* devils came in and said something about *vol de nuit avec effraction*, and walked us off.' 'Did you go quietly?' I asked. 'Er—yes, oh yes! Fairly quietly,' said Tom. 'Of course, I was angry when the little brute pulled out his revolver.' 'Had you struck him?' I asked, noticing that Tom was rather surreptitiously nursing a freckled leg of mutton he was pleased to call his hand. 'No, I'll swear to goodness I didn't,' protested my friend of the injured innocence. 'He wouldn't be alive if I had. But I may have just—pushed him,' he had conscientiously to admit as he displayed two broken knuckles. I am afraid he never got his £1,000 damages.

The following will show how casually a Monte Carlo bailee regards his responsibilities:

One morning I found Tom Dexter and Jem

Finney waiting outside the Hôtel de Paris ; they said they couldn't leave until they had seen their friend Peter Parley, whom the servants were making vain attempts to arouse. ' You see, last night,' said Tom, ' Alec Winthrop had won a bit—about five *milles*—and he asked old Jem here to look after it.' ' Who's Alec Winthrop ?' I inquired. ' *I* don't know,' said Jem. ' He's an American, I believe. I met him for the first time last night at dinner at the Helder with old Fitz. But I don't think Fitz knows him ; I think he was brought.' ' Well, this American, whoever he is,' Tom went on to say, ' asked Jem to take care of this £200 in case his luck should change. He didn't want to lose it ' (a most anti-Monte Carlist sentiment, but Mr. Winthrop was a new arrival). ' Jem went to sleep for a bit, and when he woke up Alec Winthrop had gone. Then Peter Parley came up and said : " Look here, Jem : I'm broke. Have you got any stuff ?" And Jem said, " Yes, I have, luckily. It belongs to a chap called Winthrop," and handed it over, of course. And then he went home to bed. But we want to see Peter and tell him to raise this £200 before we meet Winthrop, because we know the chap so slightly. D'you know where he's staying, Jem ?' ' Haven't the faintest idea,' yawned Jem indifferently.

The *déringolade* of the croupier nowadays is

melancholy and marked. In my youth he was a mysterious being—*sans peur et sans reproche*. No one ventured to speak to him except officially, and if any big winner felt impelled to send him a souvenir, he sent it in a most roundabout way and with much trepidation. I think it used to be left for him at the tobacconist's. But to-day the Knight of the Rake will murmur hints to his neighbour, especially if the neighbour be a lady. Should the tip not come off, he will whisper, ‘Je n’ai pas osé, on me guette;’ but if by a remote chance the number or colour he has recommended should win, he smilingly requests a commission. ‘Ce que madame plaira,’ he will generously suggest.

One day Mrs. Despard, who had been losing heavily at trente-et-quarante, came back to roulette, and ‘planked’ a louis *en plein* on to her favourite 17. To her great delight, the croupier called out, ‘Dix-sept, noir, impair et manque,’ and pushed the thirty-five louis on to the centre square on the board. Mrs. Despard stretched forward to collect her winnings, but before her taper fingers could encompass them a well-bred-looking, quietly-dressed English woman sitting on the opposite side of the table had firmly ‘scooped the lot.’ ‘I beg your pardon, madam,’ exclaimed Mrs. Despard, ‘that was *my* stake.’ The lady with the nine points of the law on her side, and by this time piled up in four

pyramids in front of her, looked gravely up, with no sign of excitement, and remarked very quietly, ‘Perhaps you would like to take my purse as well?’ Mrs. Despard turned crimson with mortification, and, with a vague sense that her blush would be taken as an admission of guilt, turned away, sick at heart, and hurried from the rooms. But a gentleman pursued her into the *vestiare*. ‘I *beg* your pardon, Mrs. Despard,’ he exclaimed: ‘I’ve never had the honour of being introduced to you, though, of course, I’ve often had the pleasure of seeing you on the stage. My name is Silvester. It was my wife who, by mistake, claimed your money just now. I was at the end of the table, and I *saw* you back 17. She had been planking her money about rather wildly, and she firmly believed, of course, that she had put on that number. Here she is. Will you allow her to apologize?’

‘Oh, Mrs. Despard, how *can* I apologize sufficiently?’ cried Mrs. Silvester. ‘Such an *appalling* mistake to have made! Here’s the money. Do *pray* try and forgive me!’

The good-natured Mrs. Despard made light of the mishap. But she only realized in how extraordinarily an untoward way it might have developed but for the vigilant eye of the excellent Mr. Silvester when that evening, at a dinner-party given by old Lady Cromlech (whom she only knew

slightly) at the Métropole Hotel, she found herself seated face to face with the aristocratic-looking lady who had so firmly believed she had backed 17.

Little Mrs. Frisby was not what you could call a gambler. She had very little money, and only played in five-franc pieces, with an occasional louis on an even chance. In fact, she often only entered the rooms from a sort of Dante sense of duty, just to walk through the Inferno and see what might be going on. But one day she discovered two old friends of hers, Lady Hardley-Dasent and her daughter (whom she had no idea were in Monte Carlo), sitting beaming, but collected, with piles of gold in front of them. ‘My dear Clara!’ exclaimed the old lady, as soon as she caught sight of Mrs. Frisby. ‘How delightful! Enid, you must take the card for a little. I’m tired, and I want to talk to Clara;’ and, handing a much beriddled piece of pasteboard to her daughter, she turned round, and after, as a matter of decency, inquiring after Lysimachus (Mrs. Frisby’s son and heir, aged three), she proceeded to divulge a wonderful system which had been explained to her and her daughter by a Russian professor who sat near them at the *table d’hôte* of the Hôtel de l’Europe, where they were staying. It was a system of *voisins*. Mrs. Frisby tried hard to grasp it, fired by the glitter from the golden range of hills in front of her fortunate friends.

‘It has been calculated by some of the greatest mathematicians of the day,’ said old Lady Hardley-Dasent (she was not so invidious as to mention names), ‘that this system can only fail, even assuming that you play all day and every day, *once* in seventeen million years!’ Mrs. Frisby, with visions of new hats, new blouses, new boots for Lysimachus, and — with persistence — even a Shetland pony, hurried to a neighbouring table and played, according to her lights, Lady Hardley-Dasent’s system. ‘*What* was it she told me?’ thought the anxious little lady. ‘If 6 turns up to back the *carré* of 6. That’s 36, of course. And I suppose in the case of bigger numbers you take the square root. What a wonderful system it seems to be, and what a clever man he must have been who discovered it! I wonder if Lysimachus will ever develop that particular kind of genius as well as—’ But just then she heard the voice of the croupier. She heard it complain : ‘Faites votre jeu, messieurs, mesdames.’ And, having observed that 5 came up last, she put a five-franc piece on 25—the square—and a louis on red. They turned up, and she was a winner of 200 francs. ‘But how *marvellous!*’ she exclaimed under her breath. And after collecting her money she put another five-franc on 5, the square root, and another louis on red. Again they turned up, and Mrs. Frisby was another 200 francs.

to the good. ‘This is absolutely supernatural!’ thought the delighted little lady. ‘Why isn’t this system better known? Why doesn’t everyone play it? Because if——’ ‘Faites votre jeu, messieurs, mesdames,’ urged the croupier. ‘But how’s this?’ reflected Mrs. Frisby. ‘If this Russian professor’s theory of cubes and cube roots is scientifically sound, nothing but five and twenty-five can ever turn up on this particular cylinder—at least, not for seventeen million years. I can’t have got hold of it quite correctly. And yet I’ve won sixteen pounds, so I must have got, at all events, some rough idea of the swing of it. I’ll just go and ask dear Lady Hardley-Dasent what you’re to do after a certain number of fives and twenty-fives have turned up;’ and she sought out her friends. They had black dabs under their eyes, and they were looking, each of them, twenty years older. Their golden range had been razed to the ground—that is to say, the piles of louis had disappeared, and each lady was prying into the corners and crannies of her purse to see whether some venturesome gold piece might not have rollicked into the gaping copper department, or insinuated himself into the cleaving company of the postage stamps. ‘My dearest Lady Hardley-Dasent,’ cried little Mrs. Frisby, ‘I’ve come to thank you for telling me your wonderful system! I’ve won sixteen pounds! Fancy, sixteen pounds!

Me! Quite a little *fortune*! But, do tell me, what do you do when the square root and the square have come up a certain number of times, because, I suppose, they can't *really* go on repeating for seventeen million years, or people would get to hear of it and come and settle at Monte Carlo, just for the sake of making the money, wouldn't they?' 'My dear Clara,' snapped her ladyship, 'I'm not quite in the mood for talking nonsense. I've lost nearly 8,000 francs in the last twenty minutes. If you're in love with the system, you're welcome to it. Go and elope with it, start a syndicate with it, anything you please! I don't know what you mean about cubes and cube roots. This system is simply backing the numbers round about the last that won, and as they've been jumping from one end of the table to the other—4, 33, zero, 28, 3, 36, 4, 31—the system and the Russian professor and the administration can all follow their example and go either to the North Pole or to the other place as far as *I'm* concerned!'

There is one system which I believe to be practically infallible, but it cannot be followed daily, only once in a way. It needs very little capital—three-halfpence will do. It is best to take up your stand near someone who is playing high and who is enjoying a run of luck. You choose your moment and you drop your purse—open—with

enough in it to jingle, or, at all events, to insure its reaching the floor rapidly and resonantly. You mention your misfortune to an official, who immediately summons assistants with brooms and squeegees, who sweep around your neighbourhood, and with ordinary luck you should get seven or eight louis, and possibly a gold hundred-franc piece or two, coins of picturesque as well as commercial interest.

About ten years ago I had some business on hand in which I thought Monsieur Orion, who was then Chef de Sûreté in Paris, could help me. I wrote to tell him I was coming over to see him, and I had no sooner set foot on the platform of the Gare du Nord when a diminutive Frenchman of about eight-and-twenty, with a close-cropped beard, came up and accosted me.

‘Monsieur Brookfield? Je viens de la part de Monsieur Orion.’

The Chief Superintendent had described me to one of his agents, who recognised me as easily as though I had been an old friend. He introduced himself as Monsieur Léon, and I saw a good deal of him for a day or two. I was amused at the extraordinary ingenuousness of the real French detective. Monsieur Léon delighted in talking of his exploits and in extolling his own adroitness and acumen.

‘Supposing you, monsieur, were instructed to keep

an individual under observation,' he said to me, 'you would probably follow on his trail—walk behind him, never let him out of your sight. "He shall not escape me, that one!" you would say to yourself. Believe me, monsieur, that is not the method. Now, the other day there devolved upon me the delicate duty of keeping watch upon a lady—beautiful, refined, elegant! And the back of her neck! Alas! in my profession we are mere martinets. We cannot choose whom to harass, whom to help. She was driving in an open landau with eight springs. I hired a coupé and kept her in sight. But I was far too crafty to follow her. What did I do, then? I drove in *front* of her, monsieur—knelt on the seat of my brougham and spied upon her through the little window at the back.'

On another occasion he said to me, as we passed a crowd on the boulevard who were watching a plumber engaged in some rather perilous work upon the roof of a house :

'Supposing I were to desire you to go into that crowd, monsieur, and detect for me a thief, how would you set to work? I wager you would be nonplussed. It is, notwithstanding, very simple. See here! The crowd is collected to observe that individual who is working on the tiles—isn't it so? Thus, all honest folk will have their faces turned

upwards to study his movements—will he fall or will he not? If he were to be seized by a vertigo, poor devil, what a fate! But the thief, on the contrary, is looking *downwards* this way and that, furtively. The fate of his fellow-creature is a matter of indifference to him. All that interests him is the appearance of his fellow-citizens' pockets. Ah! it is a true pleasure to pinch scoundrels of that type.'

On another occasion when I was in Paris, I was sitting outside the Café de la Paix, when I was accosted in the French tongue by a well-dressed stranger at the next table.

'I beg your pardon, monsieur,' he said, 'but I am a stranger in Paris. Can you tell me where I can procure good draught ale such as we get in the South?'

I told him I was sorry I could not direct him. He then went on to talk with great apparent frankness about himself. He told me that his name was De Bermont, that he was an owner of vineyards, that this was his first visit to Paris, and presently he went on to suggest that, if I chanced to be, like himself, alone and unattached in that gay city, he would esteem me infinitely obliging if I would take him round and show him the sights. At first I was rather flattered at his homage, but as he went on it occurred to me that the tale he was telling me bore a strong family likeness to one frequently told in the

vulgar tongue in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly Circus by that confidential confraternity known as the ‘boys.’ In fact, I realized that I was being ‘taken on’ by a French ‘lumberer.’ After telling me all about himself—his income, prospects, and so forth—it was not unnatural that he should invite a similar avowal from me. I told him accordingly that I was an electrician, that I was employed by a London firm, who paid me 400 francs a month, and a commission on all orders I obtained ; that the system in which I was interested was the ‘Système Siemens—pour la sonnerie et surtout—l’éclairage’; that I was in Paris partly on business, but mainly on pleasure, bound, having recently been paid a matter of 5,000 francs commission on an order I had obtained ; that I found foreigners did not even nowadays understand the English cheque system, and therefore I was carrying my £200 in loose sovereigns. Monsieur de Bermont’s mouth obviously watered. He gave a gulp. My story seemed too good to be true, as indeed it was.

‘Will you permit me to offer you a bottle of the wine of Champagne?’ he inquired, with a hungry glitter in his eye.

‘Very willingly,’ I replied. And he proceeded to order ‘une bouteille de “G. H.”’ (The unfortunate foreigner is obliged to confine his designation of

'G. H. Mumm' to these initials, as M U M M is obviously a word that none but an Englishman can even attempt to pronounce.) I was curious to see how he would approach the question of cards, which I knew would presently have to be posed.

'Does monsieur know the South of France?' he presently inquired.

'A little,' I replied. 'I know Marseille and Toulon and Grasse.'

'Then perhaps monsieur has been so far as Monte Carlo?' he asked eagerly.

'Merely to admire the bay and the situation of the town,' I answered.

'Then monsieur does not care for play?' he asked, rather anxiously.

'Not at public tables,' I said. 'There is no emotion in playing what is practically a machine. My mania is for private gambling—between friends.'

Monsieur de Bermont positively yelled with delight.

'Then, monsieur, allow me to fill your glass!' he exclaimed, pouring out the wine which the waiter had meantime brought. 'You must do me the honour to dine with me to-night, *chez Brébant*. I have one or two fellow-countrymen, vine-growers, good fellows like myself, who, like monsieur, enjoy a game at cards. We will make a party of poker!'

I told him I would be with him at seven, that at that moment I was due at a board meeting of my electrical company on the Boulevard Hausmann. However, I never saw him again, as I left that evening for London.

CHAPTER XVI

America—The extraordinary hospitality of the natives—The adventures of a night—In gaol—A novel drive—A cageful of malefactors—My health breaks down—Consumption, and how to cure it: by one who has still got it—Bordighera—Pleurisy—The Black Forest—Chopin's ‘Funeral March’—My obituary notices.

A FEW years ago in the beginning of August I took a pleasure trip to New York, staying there four days, and returning in the ship I went out in—the *St. Paul*. The voyage is not worth describing, as most people nowadays have made it. I rose each day an hour earlier, according to English time, to see the gorgeous sunrise. There were luxurious bathrooms and a skilful barber on board. On Sunday a stout purser read, in a perfunctory way, some sort of a service in the saloon, and one dismal evening there was the inevitable entertainment, which plunged all but the performers into the depths of low spirits. Most of the passengers belonged to the commercial-traveller class, and their tastes were accordingly considered in the catering. But at sea it is possible to eat anything, even ‘rare’

mutton. My next-door neighbour, who used to breakfast in pyjamas, was wont to begin his day with lobster and greengages, the stones of which he would consign to the butter-dish.

I made a desperate attempt to discover an English equivalent to the American word ‘elegant,’ and to this end I made a note of the various conjunctions into which it was placed by an elderly Yankee who was evidently partial to the epithet. I found, on consulting my list, that he had said in the course of one conversation : (i.) that the Atlantic was an ‘elegant ocean’; (ii.) that a pair of boots he had on (for which, he told me, he had given six dollars ready-made) was an ‘elegant pair of boots’; and (iii.) that Newman’s hymn, ‘Lead, kindly Light,’ was an ‘elegant hymn.’ So that I could arrive at no conclusion.

It is very unjust to judge of a nation by its commercial travellers, who are apt, perhaps, to reserve their best manners and charms for business hours. When I arrived in New York, I was overwhelmed by the kindness and cordiality of everyone I met ; and I mentally blushed as I contrasted it with the very mild ‘You-must-come-and-lunch-some-day’ sort of hospitality which we are apt to extend to our visitors when they come this side. I was made a temporary member of three clubs, and it was only by a certain amount of scheming that I contrived

to have one meal at my own expense during my visit.

But, talking of hospitality, I did on *one* occasion during my four nights' stay have it forced upon me in a way that some might not have relished. Amongst my letters of introduction I had one to Mr. 'Bob' Pinkerton, a partner in the famous detective agency, who was extremely polite when I called, and detailed one of his men to 'show me around' that evening. A tall, well-dressed, extremely agreeable man called for me at my hotel soon after dinner, a Mr. O'Donoghue. He took me a most entertaining round. We visited the Chinese quarter, which, though not to compare with the China Town in San Francisco, is nevertheless very interesting. Most of the little men appeared to be married to Irish wives. One of these told me she would rather have for a husband a Chinaman who would work than an Irishman who wouldn't. I did not discuss this nice point with her. We visited a joss-house and a Chinese theatre, where we saw a portion of a native melodrama played in front of the orchestra, which was on the stage. Then we went to a music-hall, where all the audience were Jews, and to another where they were all 'men of colour.' Then we called on 'Steve Brodie, B.J.,' which initials do not signify that Steve is a member of a religious community, but that he once jumped

off Brooklyn Bridge and deems himself champion bridge-jumper of the world. He presides over a drinking saloon on the Bowery, and there I was introduced to sundry 'toughs' and 'Bowery boys' and 'sports' of various types. Towards two o'clock in the morning we were homeward-bound and nearing my hotel, which was on Broadway, when O'Donoghue suggested that we should have a farewell glass. 'I don't think I want any more,' said I. 'Just a soft drink, then' (by which is meant an unintoxicating drink), urged my friend; and he led the way into a restaurant and called for a bottle of Vichy water. This was brought. 'How much?' asked O'Donoghue. 'Ten cents,' said the waiter. 'Ten cents! How d'you make that out?' queried my friend. 'I'm not going to pay ten cents for a five-cent drink.' After a brief wrangle the waiter disappeared to fetch the manager. O'Donoghue looked over to me and chuckled. 'Don't you say a word,' he murmured. 'Sit tight. We'll have some fun with these people.' The manager came up. 'Aren't you going to pay for your drink?' he asked brusquely. 'I'm not going to pay ten cents for a five-cent drink,' repeated my companion doggedly. Again the waiter disappeared, and presently returned, this time with a stalwart Irish policeman with a gray helmet and a club about two feet long. 'Not a word; we'll have some fun,' my

detective again enjoined in an excited whisper. ‘Hadn’t we better simply pay the ten cents?’ I suggested pusillanimously. ‘No, no, no!’ said he; ‘don’t you say a word.’ Presently we were escorted by the constable to Thirty-third Street Police-station and brought before the inspector on duty. ‘This,’ I thought, ‘is the psychological moment. My friend will now throw back his coat, exhibit some badge, and exclaim, “I am O’Donoghue the detective,” and they will all be covered with confusion.’

‘What’s the charge?’ asked the inspector.

‘Two men wouldn’t pay for their drinks,’ replied the policeman. The point at issue sounded appallingly squalid. I was about to interrupt, for I had neither ordered, consumed, nor refused to pay for a drink. And I was perfectly ready and willing to pay ten cents, or a hundred cents, to get comfortably home to my clean hotel. But O’Donoghue saw I was about to speak, and he checked me by a vigorous shake of the head. Just then it occurred to me to feel in the pocket at the back of my trousers (what is called an ‘American’ or ‘pistol’ pocket) to see whether my purse was safe. Immediately both my wrists were seized, and held over my head. ‘Is he armed?’ inquired the inspector. They searched my pockets. ‘Yes,’ they replied. And they confiscated a largish pocket-knife

that I carried. ‘What’s your name?’ asked the inspector. ‘Charles Bailey, journalist, British subject,’ I replied. ‘Arthur Edwards, merchant, St. Louis,’ said O’Donoghue. And a middle-sized elderly man in a straw hat, called the ‘janitor,’ led us from the inspector’s office. Still no revelation of identity, no discomfiture of the enemy, no fun! What could be the reason? And the truth suddenly hurled itself upon me: although his speech was clear and his step firm, my hospitable guide had temporarily paralyzed his powers of judgment by too many cocktails. He was what is called in the American language ‘full.’ We were taken down a whitewashed passage, lighted by occasional flaring gas-jets in wire globes. On one side was a row of cells, and to each cell a door of iron cross-bars. When we reached a vacant apartment, my faithful janitor gave an adroit hitch to my collar which flung me in, and he slammed the iron gate with a clank. He proceeded by similar means to lodge my detective friend in the next compartment. My room was about eight feet by five, half of it taken up by a plank bed. The smell of carbolic was unpleasant but reassuring. ‘Have—er—have I got to *stop* here?’ I asked the gaoler, rather feebly. ‘What d’you think you were brought here fur?’ he retorted grimly, and passed on. Presently I heard the voice of O’Donoghue. ‘Mr. Bailey,’ he exclaimed, dis-

creetly addressing me by my *nom de cachot*, 'I can't say how sorry I am for this. The fact is, I got a bit full, and when that darned waiter asked me ten cents for a five-cent drink I got ugly. But don't you know anyone in New York you could send to? They're bound to ring you up a messenger here if you ask for one.' There were several people in New York to whom I could have sent had I felt so inclined. Also I had a letter of introduction in my pocket to Colonel O'Brien, the Chief of the Police. But I felt it possible, although by no means certain, that I might never again have a chance of sleeping on a plank bed in a prison cell, and that it was an opportunity not to be missed. So I took off my coat and rolled it up, and put it under my head and lay down. Before going to sleep, however, I sounded two blasts on a silver cab-whistle which I chanced to have in my pocket. The old janitor appeared. 'What d'you want?' he asked surlily. 'How long have you lived in New York?' I inquired. 'Don't you know that two rings means iced water?' (a fact I had only learned two days before). This mild witticism amused the old custodian out of all proportion to its merits. He explained in a matter-of-fact way that they did not provide iced water in Thirty-third Street Police-station, but he was so kind as to hand me a tin mug through my bars, which I was able to fill at a tap by the head of

my so-called bed. ‘Now, *you’re* a decent man,’ my warder remarked flatteringly. ‘*You* know how to talk to anyone. But who’s your friend, anyhow? Is he a fighting man?’ For O’Donoghue had assailed the poor old man with showers of undeserved abuse, mingled with threats. ‘*I* don’t know who he is,’ I replied. ‘I just—picked him up in a resort.’ (‘Resort,’ in American, has a wide meaning. It may mean anywhere, from a gambling-saloon to a fashionable watering-place.) After a most refreshing sleep, I was called at about seven, I think, by my friend the janitor, and we all came to attention along the corridor outside our respective cells. We were paraded in a yard, and then put into the penitentiary waggon, which was to take us to Jefferson’s Market, the central depot. It was a commodious vehicle, suggestive of bean-feasts and bank-holidays. To complete the illusion, one or two of our party were still under the influence of drink. And there were two or three light-hearted girls and a rather morose old woman. On the other hand, there were three policemen on the box, and two on the step behind. There were leather curtains drawn up, which could be lowered in case of bad weather. It was a perfectly lovely morning. The city glittered like a stream in the golden sunlight. A little crowd had collected round the gateway to see our suddenly convened Society of

Odd Fellows start on their drive. My next-door neighbour, a cab-driver, in a tall silk hat and light suit, recognised his little, anxious-faced wife in the group. She had evidently missed him at home, and knew where she was likely to find him. He waved his hand to her cheerily, and exclaimed : 'All right, Sadie ! Drunk and disorderly !' And he turned to me as we bowled off, and continued, 'And I suppose, sir, that's the case with you ?' I handed round my cigarette-case, which was fortunately a large one, and we all lit up, including the girls, the old woman, and a hideous-looking negro. We chatted and laughed. I advised the young ladies to come over to our side, where I assured them that, under a constitutional monarchy, they would find far more individual liberty than under a republic. But in the middle of my address upon freedom we had arrived at the nail-studded doors of our prison, and we were all—the men, at least—thrown into a huge cage, where there was already a crowd of malefactors assembled, and where fresh batches arrived at intervals from various parts of the city. This was a most noisome den. I sighed wearily for the fumes of carbolic which had offended me in my cell, for they were certainly preferable to 'all the perfumes of Street Araby' which assailed me now. My cigarettes, however, were some comfort, and I distributed them amongst my 'lot o' nice new

friends.' There were 'toughs,' broken-nosed men for the most part, with an air of fierceness, tempered by intemperance, with ragged coats over red flannel shirts and broad-brimmed sombrero hats. These desperadoes, whose appearance suggested nothing short of holding up trains or shooting Sheriffs, were all of them, as a matter of fact, harmless drunkards who had been mildly disorderly, and were suffering terribly from headache. As a contrast, a young Italian was ushered in, called Pietro Barcia, who had only a few hours previously committed a murder. He was a lad of eighteen, with a perfectly expressionless face, and exhibited no emotion whatever. When I gave him a cigarette, and asked him what had brought him there, he replied quite blandly, 'I 'av-a justa shoot a man,' and spat through his teeth. Several of the 'toughs' gathered round and pressed for details. 'Did he draw on *you*?' 'Did you *kill* him?' 'That would be way down Canal Street, I guess,' etc. The young assassin told his story with perfect sang-froid with a strong Italian accent and many superfluous final syllables. 'Was-a what-a we call-a vendetta. 'E kill-a my father two year ago. I not old-a enough then. I wait-a. And just-a now I put-a one ball in his-a shoulder, and another in his-a thigh. Oh yes! is-a dead all right.' It was refreshing to be at last, at about eleven o'clock, ushered into court, and

to see somebody clean. We all stood in a long row in front of the magistrate, our accusers and their witnesses being opposite, facing us, and as each case was disposed of, those concerned in the next edged up nearer the 'beak.' Next before me was the morose old lady whose acquaintance I had made in the pleasure-penitentiary waggon. She knew how often she had been charged before, and, after fumbling for a moment in her purse, extracted and held ready the precise amount of her fine, which she planked into the clerk's hand almost before the amount had been mentioned by his Worship. When our turn came, the case was disposed of in two minutes. My friend reiterated his economic prejudice against paying ten cents for drinks of half that value. The magistrate inquired, in an indifferent tone, not as though he really cared, whether we had been locked up all night, and on hearing that we had, he laconically exclaimed 'Discharged!' and we were set at liberty. O'Donoghue solemnly vowed vengeance on the restaurateur, and I have little doubt he has by this time wreaked it. When I reached my hotel, dirty and dishevelled, the clerk gave me a very sly look as he handed me my key. I endeavoured to look correspondingly raffish, but I am afraid it was a poor attempt.

It was in the winter following my trip to America that I felt so weak and ill that I submitted my

thorax to the unerring ear of my friend Kingston Fowler, who immediately discovered that I was in an advanced stage of consumption. He told me I must at once give up London and late hours. I deeply regret that, through culpable thoughtlessness, I omitted to note down so important a date as that of my retirement from the stage. I can only remember I was at the time under the most considerate and generous management in London, that of Mr. and Mrs. D'Oyly Carte, so that my last remembrance of the stage was a very happy one.

I had no idea, until I developed the disease myself, that there were so many simple and infallible cures for phthisis. Every other man I met had a remedy.

'My dear fellow, *why* go abroad?' asked one. 'Why not simply take a house at Croydon. No treatment, no diet, no physic. Simply *live at Croydon!*'

A lady begged me to go and visit an old man who 'had electricity in his fingers.' He would rub my chest every day until a lump came, and then he would go on rubbing it until the lump went away, and then I should be quite well. This sounded a simple remedy, but I was too sceptical to try it.

Another friend of mine told me that a bunch of watercress eaten every morning before getting up would heal the most perforated of lungs.

However, I went through the conventional old-fashioned treatment—that is to say, I went to Bordighera, and spent most of my time indoors, with the windows shut and a big fire in the stove. My first spell there seemed to do me good, but my second visit (I had gone back to England for the summer, and spent my holiday in bed with pleurisy) nearly killed me. I had taken a house built in the old Italian fashion—that is to say, with very small windows, and so disposed as to receive a minimum of sun. The floors of the rooms were tiled with red, the ceilings were groined, and the walls were so thick (about 2 feet) that in case of earthquake, a not uncommon phenomenon in those parts, they would either successfully resist the shocks or, if the worst came to the worst, crush the inhabitants into powder, with merciful thoroughness.

In Bordighera I was, I believe, the village infant. I was forty-one, and my youngest playmate was about twelve or fifteen years older. The inhabitants of the Riviera conspire to persuade folk at home that out there there is no winter, and visitors fall in with the plot in order to console themselves for having been deceived. As a matter of fact, during my two visits there, the weather was in every respect as loathsome as in my happy native land. When I was permitted, between mistral and siroccos and *tra montane*, to take the air, I used to

meet old gentlemen with shawls over their shoulders and carrying coloured cotton umbrellas.

'How do you do, Mr. Brookfield,' one of them would cry across the Marina : 'I hear you've had a new sound in your lung the last day or two. Now, would that be a *râle* or a friction ?'

After getting worse and worse at Bordighera, and lighter and lighter in weight, I was suddenly told by Fowler that he had arranged for me to be taken in, in a couple of months' time, at Dr. Walther's sanatorium at Nordrach, in the Black Forest. My wife and I travelled there by easy stages, staying a few weeks at Bagni di Lucca (a perfectly delightful spot, beloved by Shelley and Goethe, very picturesque, and absurdly cheap; the Roman baths are most efficacious, and it is the only country in Italy which produces edible mutton) and a few weeks at Badenweiler.

Dr. Walther is far and away the most successful lung specialist there is, but the treatment is a drastic one. The walls of the bedrooms are of varnished wood, the floors covered with oilcloth, the windows invariably open—generally with the casement removed altogether. There is very little furniture in each room, beyond an extremely comfortable bed, a *chaise longue*, a table, and a shower-bath. There are no assistants or nurses. The doctor attends personally to his fifty patients, and visits each one

three times a day, examines his temperature chart, and regulates his exercise. The meals are the trying part of the treatment, although everything is the best of its kind and admirably cooked. They are taken in an open shed at a long table, presided over by the doctor, with the German patients on his right, and the British sufferers on his left. Each has to eat about three times as much as his appetite—at all events, if he be English—demands. Breakfast is a comparatively easy meal—a litre of milk, three or four ounces of butter on white or black bread, and a few slices of cold meat. But the most trying ordeal is the mid-day meal; half a chicken (leg, wing, and breast), five slices of beef, with vegetables, and a full plate of pudding, would be an ordinary dinner, accompanied by a litre of milk. And for supper (at seven o'clock) hot pork and three or four pancakes, or perhaps hot veal and a plate of minced raw beef, together with another three or four ounces of butter and the regulation litre of milk. After supper we used to sit about and smoke till nine, when we went to bed. In all weathers (and it rained incessantly for the first fortnight I was there) the patients troop out after breakfast and after dinner, bareheaded and great-coatless, in parties of two or three, and walk the distance allotted by the doctor at a pace not to exceed two miles an hour. All have to be back an

hour before the next meal, to rest for the effort it involves.

Dr. Walther is a man of a striking personality—powerfully built, about five foot ten, a large head, a long, fair beard, and deeply-set eyes. He is extremely kind-hearted, and devoted to the well-being of his patients, but far from suave in his manner. A poor patient who was suffering probably, and not unnaturally, from indigestion went to him and complained :

‘Doctor, I have a pain in my head. I think it must be liver.’

‘It may be liver,’ replied the great man, with a slight German accent ; ‘it certainly is not brains.’

The most depressing influence on first arriving at Nordrach is the hilarity of all the patients. The whole settlement seems pervaded by laughter, with a cavity in it. But one soon becomes infected with the same kind of dance-of-death merriment, and after a week or two I gained great popularity among my fellow-sufferers by compiling a comic alphabet, beginning :

‘A’s the Acute who is gathered when young,
B the Bacillus they find in his lung,’

and so forth.

When a death occurs (and the percentage of deaths is extraordinarily low, and most of them due

to disobedience of orders), the only intimation of the fact that reaches the patients is the appearance of the varnisher, on his way to give a fresh coat to the chamber of death, in order to convert it into a chamber of convalescence for the next arrival.

One evening, as we were sitting over our supper, an old man appeared outside our shed, with long white hair, which fell in heavy curls upon his shoulders, and a wild white beard. He told the doctor that he was a pianist, a pupil of the Abbé Liszt, and that he was destitute. He was given a hearty meal, and we were allowed to sit up till ten to hear him play. (There was an excellent piano at the end of the shed.) He was a fine performer, and went through an excellent programme. But I shall never forget the effect of this white-haired old wanderer sitting erect at the piano, his head thrown back, surrounded by twenty or thirty eager-eyed patients, in various stages of consumption, listening with rapt attention to the solemn strains of Chopin's 'Funeral March.'

Thanks to Dr. Walther and his treatment, I put on nearly 2 stone weight in a little over two months. I was 10 stone 4 before I went, and 12 stone 2 when I left. And I am over 12 stone to-day, three years later, which seems to me to speak well for the Nordrach system.

I do not think I can bring these random reminis-

cences more appropriately to a close than by quoting from two obituary notices of myself which appeared in the press while I was laid up at Cowes with pleurisy (when, by the way, I was honoured by most gracious and kindly inquiries from a royal patient who was at that time laid up on board his yacht with an injured knee). Both the newspapers in question spoke of me far more kindly than I had any right to expect, and one finished up by saying : 'Never a great actor, he was invaluable in small parts'; while the other remarked in conclusion : 'But, after all, it is at his club that he will be most missed.'

THE END



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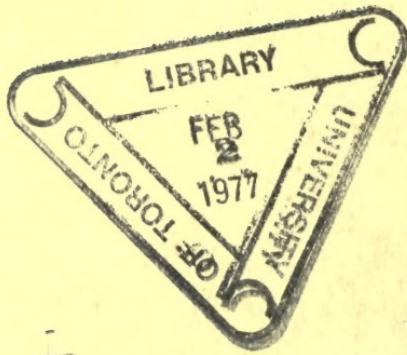
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